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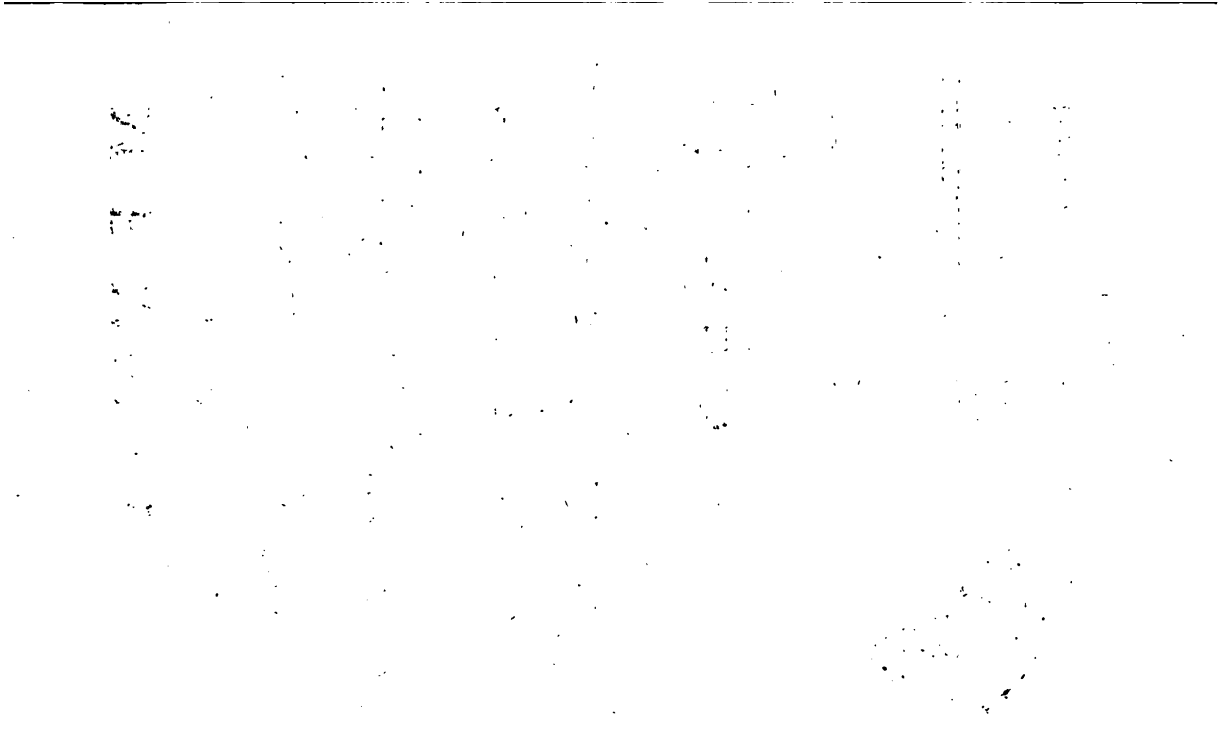
MEMOIRS

OF THE

MARQUIS DE ST. FORLAIX.

VOL. III.



MEMOIRS

OF THE

MARQUIS DE ST. FORLAIX.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH

OF

MONS. FRAMERY.

BY MRS. BROOKE.

L'Honneur, de tous les biens, eſt le plus precieux,
Et par un vieil abus difficile à comprendre,
Nous le pouvons ôter, et ne ſaurions le rendre.
T. CORNEILLE, Illuſtres Ennemis, Act I. Sc. iii.

VOL. III.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

LONDON,
Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall Mall.
MDCCLXX.

249. s. 320.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

MARQUIS DE ST. FORLAIX.

LETTER XLVII.

From CORSANGE to his Father.

From the horrible abyſs into which my crimes have thrown me; ready to quit it, with life, for ever.

YOUR fears, Sir, are accompliſhed. I have filled up the meaſure of my offences; they have compleated that of my ſhame. An obſcure dungeon, chains, re-

morſe, followed by an ignominious death; behold my future portion!

Honor, glory, the ſweet hope of being happy, and of diſpenſing happineſs to others, are no more. I have loſt all, in renouncing virtue.—O God! I dare ſtill implore thee! Thou alone remaineſt to me in theſe horrible moments!

Turn thine eyes from my crimes, to caſt them only on my repentance! Thou canſt not refuſe pardon, ſince thou haſt commanded hope.

And you—you, whoſe name I dare not pronounce, ſince I have rendered myſelf unworthy of the tender title which attached me to you—liſten to the detail of my criminal life—liſten to it—to hate me

ſtill more—yet to pardon me. Is this the account which I ought to give you!

Great God! ſince I have not bluſhed to commit ſo many horrors, give me at leaſt the force to confeſs them.

The inſtant of my firſt crimes decided the reſt of my life. My miſtaken mother thought ſhe was only indulging the weakneſs of my youth, and has conducted me to the ſcaffold. "Juſt God, turn from "her thoſe evils which her exceſſive love "has accumulated on my head!" She intended to preſerve me, and has only haſtened my deſtruction. Two years of confinement in the caſtle of S—was the only puniſhment to which ſhe could be brought to conſent. Weak and dangerous puniſhment! It ſhould have been more, or have been nothing.

Age, reflection, misfortune, all concurred to ripen my underſtanding, without correcting my heart. I examined my turn of mind, and found it impatient, fierce, impetuous. I eaſily conceived that I muſt reſtrain this diſpoſition, if I wiſhed to render it really free; that I muſt conceal my paſſions from the eyes of mankind, that I might privately ſatisfy them with impunity. I ſtudied therefore to become maſter of my firſt emotions, and aſſumed an exterior of the moſt inſinuating ſoftneſs.

It was only for my affections, when they had an appearance of purity, that I reſerved the violence of my nature. My ſoul was ſo corrupted, that a year ſufficed to this ſtudy. I employed art, even in my little ſallies of temper, which I had the addreſs always to make thoſe about me

me interpret to my advantage. I at that time prided myſelf on this fatal ſkill. I now, but too late, abhor it. Thoſe to whoſe care I was intruſted, were the firſt to perceive this change. They ſpoke to you of it. My mother believed my faults corrected. She wept, you relented at her tears, and I was free.

The firſt uſe I made of my liberty was to eſtabliſh in the world, into which I was entering, the idea of my newly aſſumed character. I came to Paris, and formed connexions there. They were worthy of me. The wicked ſeem to have an inſtinctive knowledge of each other. If they appear to attach themſelves to a virtuous man, they are not themſelves miſtaken; 'tis with the purpoſe of deceiving him. But when they aim at contracting a ſincere friendſhip (if it is permitted me to

profane this ſacred name), they are ſure of their aim; it is a man as wicked as themſelves whom they make choice of.

Such attachments could not fail of reviving and ſtrengthening my firſt inclinations: they alſo rendered diſſimulation ſtill more neceſſary to me. Under its maſk, I delivered myſelf to vice with all the ardor of which I was capable. It was not enough to cover my faults with this veil: a man of worthy character was neceſſary to me, the luſtre of whoſe virtues might contribute to conceal them from the world. Chance threw St. Forlaix in my way. Friendſhip united him to me, and my vile diſguiſed ſelf-intereſt appeared to return it by correſpondent ſentiments.

O! St. Forlaix! how little do you merit the dreadful ills I have brought on you, and

and your reſpectable family! My God! when I conſider theſe crimes, I ſhould deſpair of pardon, if I depended leſs on thy infinite goodneſs!

I felt then, that it was only ſhadowed by the name and reputation of a man of honor like St. Forlaix, that I could venture to appear in the world. I reſolved to ſave myſelf by his protection, or to involve him in my ruin. I had ſeen his ſiſter, for a moment, after my coming out of the caſtle of S—. Her beauty had ſtruck me: the deſire of poſſeſſing her charms, and yet more her wealth, had inflamed my heart. I perceived that St. Forlaix was equally taken with Julia. I wiſhed to make this paſſion ſerve my deſigns. I neglected nothing to give birth to an equal inclination in the ſoul of my ſiſter, and to increaſe that of her lover.

When I thought I had ſucceeded, I contrived for them a ſecret meeting, in which I wiſhed St. Forlaix might become happy. Julia and ſhe would then have depended entirely on me, and I hoped to be able to abuſe this power to my own infamous purpoſes. But my ſiſter was worthy of her rank, worthy of thoſe to whom ſhe owed her birth. St. Forlaix was too timid; I ought rather to ſay, too virtuous. There remained to me of my project, only the horror of having conceived it.

During theſe tranſactions, you recalled me to Ornance; you wiſhed me to purſue honor, to enter the road which led to glory; but I only knew the name of glory to deſpiſe it.

A great ſoul is neceſſary, to feel its value. Mine, degraded by the vileſt paſſions, ſaw only

only a ridiculous prejudice in that ardor which tranſports every noble mind. It might have led me to a glorious death; I hurried towards one covered with infamy.'

Where ſhould I have found courage in dangers? I, whoſe timid and coward heart was every hour enfeebled by the continual fears inſeparable from my wicked actions?'

It was at this time I again ſaw Henrietta. My heart gave way to a paſſion for her, which partook of that wild exceſs of which it was ſo particularly ſuſceptible. I eaſily ſeduced her innocent ſoul. Her manner of thinking, ſo violent, ſo impetuous, ſo nearly reſembling my own, conſpired to render our chains indiſſoluble: our friends in vain endeavored to break them; the efforts they made, only ſerved to draw them the cloſer.

They ſeparated us. What a cruel moment for two hearts ſo ſtrongly united! two hearts which, without regarding the conſequences, had delivered themſelves ſo blindly to happineſs!

With what rage was I agitated during the firſt night I ſpent at M—! I ſuffered tortures ſcarce to be expreſſed: the fatigue I felt from them could alone procure my ſoul a momentary calm; I employed that calm in meditating projects for the following night.

I executed them. I ſet out alone. In leſs than two hours I arrived at the caſtle of St. Forlaix. I awakened the porter. The hope of a reward rendered him favorable to my deſires. I reached the door of Henrietta's apartment. An agitation

ſimilar

ſimilar to mine had driven ſleep far from her. I diſtinguiſhed eaſily her ſighs, her tears: my name eſcaped her lips, and I pronounced her's loud enough to be heard: ſurprized, ſhe ſtopped, ſhe liſtened, ſhe again heard me; fear and tenderneſs held her ſoul ſuſpended: I appeared, I fell at her feet, ſhe claſped me in her arms — Moment full of delight! oughteſt thou to have conducted us to a crime, and ſowed the moſt dreadful remorſe in our hearts!

What ſhall I ſay? I explained to Henrietta my deſign; I painted to her our ſufferings; I propoſed means — means from which her virtue as firſt recoiled with horror, but which I ſoon convinced her were neceſſary. She was ſtaggered; love, my deſpair, her own weakneſs, all combated for me. I became her huſband — I became a father — the pen falls from my

hand. Why was not my head daſhed againſt the rocks of Ornance, at the inſtant when I firſt ſaw the light? from what a monſter would it have delivered the univerſe! What miſeries would it have ſaved thoſe virtuous ſouls I have now plunged in wretchedneſs, execrable villain as I am! did I fear there could be no more ſuch on the earth! I reſolved then to perpetuate the race.

Unhappy child! thou haſt a criminal father; thou oweſt thy exiſtence to a crime; thou canſt not be innocent. Die, if poſſible, before the hour deſtined to thy birth. Die, that thou mayeſt not bluſh eternally for the crimes of thy father; or rather, that thou mayeſt not equal them.

Henrietta! guiltleſs and unfortunate victim of my raging paſſions, to what unheard-of

heard-of fate art thou reſerved? O God, thou God mild and patient, calm my diſtracted ſoul! I ſhall forget even thee, if thou doſt not appeaſe the rage which poſſeſſes me!

The day preceding that of my departure for the Iſles arrived; nothing was in readineſs to prevent it.

I had always hoped you would have given me, ſome days before my voyage, the money you had deſtined for my uſe. Your prudence defeated my deſigns. It was neceſſary to have recourſe to other means. I reſolved to apply to St. Forlaix, to that St. Forlaix who had ever been my friend, who had the moſt perfect confidence in me, who had ſome months before choſen to diſmiſs a faithful domeſtic, rather

rather than ſuſpect me of a robbery of which I alone was culpable.

I made my eſcape from M—, and flew to Verſailles, where I met by accident two ſoldiers of my regiment, who had already ſerved me in my excurſions, accompanied by two of their comrades. I engaged them all in my deſigns. I contrived to bring St. Forlaix into the park, when I tried every means of leading him to my point. All my perſuaſions were vain. I might perhaps have obtained of him the ſum I deſired, if I had made a loſs at play my pretext of aſking it; but, beſides that my preſence at Verſailles, whilſt I ought to have been at M—, would have appeared to him ſuſpicious, I wiſhed, as he rightly conjectured, to engage him ſo far in my attempt that his name might protect me from the conſequences.

If

If the friends of St. Forlaix had not come up at the end of our converſation, my four hired ruffians were ready, at my firſt ſignal, to have ſeized him; to have forced him to ſatisfy me, and to have retained him priſoner till my project had been accompliſhed. My purpoſe was deferred till the next day. I made him promiſe to bring what money might be neceſſary to the ſafety of the conqueror.

This was all I deſired. He had no other combat to fear than that which was prepared for him the preceding evening: when I was returned home, my ſpies watched the avenues of his houſe, to prevent all intelligence, as well as all violence, on his ſide.

In the evening, however, reflexion began to diſquiet me. "If," ſaid I, "by ſu-

"perior

" perior dexterity, or by ſome means of
" which I am ignorant, St. Forlaix ſhould
" diſcover me, he is powerful, I am very
" culpable, he may ruin me for ever:
" beſides, I dread his courage as much as
" the cowardice of my aſſaſſins. If I
" could find a method to execute my pur-
" poſe without his aſſiſtance, or that of
" my four villains who might perhaps be
" my firſt accuſers, ſhould I not do well
" to make uſe of it?"

I was in the ſtreet, it was late, and very dark, when I made theſe reflections. I ſtopped a moment to deliberate, and leaned againſt the door of a houſe which had a genteel appearance. The lock, which I ſuppoſe was careleſsly faſtened, ſlipped back, and the door gave way to my weight. Great God! it was by thy permiſſion the moſt deteſtable idea preſented itſelf to my imagination.

imagination. It inſtantly occurred to me, that I could never hope a more favorable occaſion to execute my deſign. I entered. A lamp lighted up the ſtaireaſe; and though it increaſed the danger, it alſo ſerved to guide my doubtful ſteps. I ſaw a chamber which appeared to me that of the maſter of the houſe. The key was in the door; all was in the moſt profound ſilence. I was not accuſtomed to theſe daring enterprizes: my ſoul was not formed for them. Twenty times I was on the point to deſcend, to fly, to abandon my infamous purpoſe; as often the fear of having myſelf to blame for my unhappineſs, the powerful inclination which hurried me away, the temptation of opportunity, retained me. I ſtood immoveably fixed at this fatal door. The conflict of my thoughts ſuffered me to diſtinguiſh nothing. I wept.

In

In taking out my handkerchief to dry my tears, a letter dropped at my feet. It was one of thoſe I had received from Henrietta. Thoſe adored characters reſtored to me all my raſhneſs, all my fury. I opened the door, I entered precipitately, I advanced five or ſix ſteps, and ſtopped. I had no longer the leaſt ray of light; the moſt gloomy darkneſs ſurrounded me. The door was ſhut upon me: not an object remained to point out my way. My courage entirely forſook me. I deteſted in one moment all the errors of my paſt life, I deteſted the fatal occaſion which had brought me thither, I deteſted even love itſelf. Scarce could I ſupport my weight. My trembling limbs failed me, I fell on the floor, and my tears ran in abundance. I felt my ſobs ready to ſuffocate me, and I did not dare to give them

them a free courſe, leſt ſome perſon might be in bed in the chamber where I was. I raiſed myſelf at length, reſolved to regain the door, and go out of this houſe, even were all my projects certain of being at an end.

In ſo cruel a ſituation, I had not been able to preſerve ſufficient preſence of mind to make the obſervations neceſſary in order to my returning, without noiſe, by the ſide of the room on which I entered. I therefore determined to advance at hazard to ſearch out the wall, and follow its guidance till I had found the door. I walked ſoftly. I drew my hanger, in order to extend my reach, and guide myſelf by the firſt object it ſhould meet. Fatal precaution! At the firſt ſtep I took, I found my hand on the face of ſome perſon in the bed, and I was at the ſame time ſeized by a ſtrong and

and vigorous arm. A maſculine voice, rendered louder by fear, cried out ſeveral times, "Thieves!"

The man who held me was already at the foot of his bed; he claſped me faſt, loaded me with the moſt injurious, but too much merited names, and continued crying for help.

I fell at his feet. I ſnatched a moment when his voice failed him, to make him attend to my prayers and tears, and to implore his pity.

"Do not, Sir," ſaid I, "perſiſt to ruin "me. I am young, and of a diſtinguiſhed "family. You know not to what deſpair "your juſt rigor will drive ſome perſons, "who merit a better fate; a fatal con-"currence of accidents conducted me "hither.

" hither. My heart had already felt the " ſtings of remorſe, I was retiring when " you awoke, without the leaſt deſign of " doing you any injury."

I added to theſe proteſtations all thoſe which I thought capable of touching him, and I ſucceeded.

" You do not perhaps deſerve my com- " paſſion," ſaid he; " but 'tis no matter. " I am naturally indulgent, I had rather " it ſhould be the lot of others to puniſh " your crimes. I feel all the miſery which " unworthy children, like you, too often " cauſe to the moſt reſpectable parents: " are yours of rank?"

" Of the moſt diſtinguiſhed, Sir," ſaid I, with that ardor which hope had reſtored to me.

" Render

" Render thanks to them then," ſaid he, " and ceaſe to diſhonor them. Go out " this moment, and fear nothing."

As he pronounced theſe words, conducting me at the ſame time to the door, it was forced open by the guard, whom his cries had drawn thither. Their appearance affected me to that degree that I fell. The light of their flambeaux had no ſooner reached me, than the maſter of the houſe examined my habits; they were thoſe of my footman, which I had put on to be unknown at Verſailles. My whole appearance gave the lie to all I had been ſaying. Convinced I meant to deceive him, he caſt on me a look of mingled diſdain and horror.

" Unhappy wretch!" ſaid he, " your " falſehood has rendered you unworthy of " my pity."

Then,

Then, addreſſing himſelf to the guard, "I give up to you," ſaid he, "a villain "who has entered my houſe in the night "by ſtealth. You have taken him with "arms in his hand. I have no occaſion "to ſay more. Do your duty."

I was ſeized without reſiſtance: I was not in a condition to make any. They fettered me, and conducted me to a dungeon. I am ignorant how long I remained there. The exceſs of ſurprize, of ſorrow, and of ſhame, deprived me of my ſenſes. I was at length taken from thence. What horrors had I not to undergo in a new priſon!

The executioners, the torture they inflicted, and above all, the remorſe with whic

which my ſoul was tormented, were alone capable of recalling me to exiſtence.

I was interrogated on my name and family. I carefully concealed both. Ah, Sir! what neither reaſon, your example, or inſtructions, had been able to do, one moment's adverſity performed. This heart, dead till now to the leſſons of virtue, heard and acknowledged its aweful voice. I deſpiſed life too much, to think of confeſſing what would have preſerved it at the riſque of covering you with infamy. Your name, your glory, were more dear to me than my own ſafety. It was in me an act of filial piety to forget, in this dreadful moment, thoſe to whom I owed my being: it was the only virtuous action of my life.

They have this morning inflicted on me the moſt cruel tortures, in order to force from

from me a confeſſion of my name and accomplices. " My name," ſaid I, " would " be unuſeful to you: why do you then " ſeek to diſhonor it? I have no accom- " plice. The ſociety in which I have " lived furniſhes no ſouls capable of ſhar- " ing in the crime of which I have been " guilty. Puniſh me: I have merited it. " It is in vain you aſk more."

They appeared ſatisfied with my reply, and my torments ceaſed.

Whilſt they were unbinding me, one of my judges approached me. " Monſ. De " Corſange," ſaid he in a low voice, " I " admire your firmneſs."

I cannot paint to you the ſurprize, the terror, with which I felt myſelf ſtruck at hearing him pronounce my name. I look-

ed at him attentively, and knew him. How was I to act in so cruel a circumstance? To deny the truth, appeared to me a very imprudent step, and one which would have dispensed with the secresy and discretion which I might otherwise expect to obtain of him.

The effect which astonishment had on me was too convincing, to suffer me even to try that means, had I intended it.

"You know me, Sir," said I; "you are "a man of honor, and will not betray my "secret. I even dare expect from your "probity (not on my own account, I am "no longer worthy to be considered), but "for the sake of a family whose rank and "virtues are known to you, that this secret "shall never —"

"If

" If I had been capable of revealing it," interrupted he, " I could have ſpared you " many tortures."

In the confidence which he obliged me to have in him, I entreated him to obtain me the permiſſion of writing to you. He procured it me. He even took on himſelf, againſt all the forms of juſtice, to ſend this letter to you without reading it.

The permiſſion is granted, and I take advantage of it. I have little time remaining. All is perhaps, at this moment, ready for my execution; and a populace, greedy of horrible ſpectacles, drawn together by indolence, are going to enjoy my torments, to glut themſelves with my ſhame, without profiting by my example.

I have only a few moments to ſhare between my God and you, and thoſe I ſhall give to you are in effect devoted to Him.

Pardon me, Sir; forget, if it is poſſible, all the evils which I have brought upon you—forget my very exiſtence—what do I ſay?—The ſhame with which my crimes will overwhelm you will without ceaſing recall it to you, and compel you to remember it with deteſtation.

May my unhappy mother remain for ever ignorant of the ſtate to which I am reduced! I too well know her ſenſibility. My death will be followed by hers. The exceſs of her tenderneſs has deceived her. Does it become me to complain of having been too tenderly beloved? You both rejoiced at the moment of my birth; my death

death will coſt you tears of blood. That death, far from putting an end to the dreadful afflictions my life has cauſed you, will only ſerve to render them more exquiſite.

I diſhonor a father; a ſiſter, the innocent victim of my crimes. Her fortune, her fame, her happineſs, all will expire with me! I am the only criminal, and I am the leaſt to be pitied.

O Sir! O my father!—the idea of the manner in which you will be affected is infinitely the ſharpeſt of my tortures.

And you, St. Forlaix, my virtuous friend, of whoſe misfortune I am alſo the cauſe, and of whom a few days later I ſhould have been the diſgrace, dare I implore your pardon? Alas! in whoſe name can I demand it? Is it in my own, who

have ſeduced, who have betrayed you, who have wounded the ſanctity of friendſhip? in my own, who have robbed, who have purpoſed to aſſaſſinate you? Is it in the name of an adored miſtreſs, whom I tear for ever from your arms? is it in that of a ſiſter whom I have diſhonored? Will one tear be ſhed for me, which does not render me more criminal? Theſe fatal ideas give me torments above my ſtrength to bear.

Dare I implore thee, dear and unhappy Henrietta! too tender miſtreſs! too much adored ſpouſe! wilt thou too come to overwhelm me with thy preſence, to rend my ſoul by that of our infant? canſt thou think without horror of the monſter who has carried diſgrace and ſhame into thy boſom! who has done the moſt cruel outrage, and is unable to repair it? of him whoſe crimes

crimes have reduced him to the ſad extreme of having nothing to wiſh for either of you but death?—Yet pardon me: it was for thy ſake the blackeſt of thoſe crimes were committed. Pardon me. I already ſuffer too much. I cannot bear the addition of thy hate. That fear alone ſurpaſſes all my ſorrows. I ſtill merit thy pity. Others owe me only deteſtation and horror; whilſt thou, more worthy than even them of compaſſion, oweſt me a more tender ſentiment. Thou canſt not feel the ſame indignation againſt thy huſband, againſt the father of thy child. Thou canſt not hate me—thou haſt loved me to ſuch exceſs.—Adieu! Henrietta! I die adoring thee, and for having adored thee too fondly.

Adieu! my father! Adieu! all that I held moſt dear! all you whom I have

rendered miſerable! I have ſatisfied human juſtice, leave me to ſatisfy the divine. Adieu!

I hear the dreadful ſound of the bars that ſecure my dungeon. They open! I go to death—I go to appear before the greateſt, the moſt aweful of judges.—Leave me, then, ye horrible, ye importunate ideas. It is to the contemplation of Him, I would devote theſe laſt moments.

LET-

LETTER XLVIII.

To Monſ. St. FORLAIX, at the Head Quarters.

St. Forlaix.

THE family of Monſ. D'Ornance is not the only unhappy one. My fears were prophetic; they refuſed to hear me, and have too much reaſon to repent it. I have not the barbarous vanity, amidſt ſuch diſtreſs, to applaud myſelf on my own ſuperior prudence: I only pity them; I only wiſh they had liſtened to me, becauſe they would now have ſtood leſs in

need of pity. Diſtruſt has in them produced its uſual effect, that of cauſing misfortunes much greater than thoſe of which they were apprehenſive.

You muſt have expected the ſhocking ſcene which paſſed here yeſterday. I had related to your mother the fatal circumſtance that attended the death of Corſange; hiding from her however the part your ſiſter bore in it. She informed me in her turn, that Henrietta, in ſpite of her apparent tranquillity, was ſtill abſorbed in her paſſion for him, but that ſhe was in the moſt abſolute uncertainty as to his fate. Solitude only had charms for her: ſhe who ſo lately breathed nothing but diſſipation. They had watched her in theſe retired moments. She had got the habit of ſpeaking loud, though alone.

" Dear

"Dear lover," ſaid ſhe, "canſt thou "abandon me in my preſent ſtate?—what "is become of thee?—doſt thou think "to fly me?—doſt thou not carry with "thee the image of thy Henrietta, as thine "is ever before her eyes? No—thou "haſt not forgot me, thy heart cannot. "The barbarians who ſurround me, eager "to inflict new torments, jealous of my "happineſs, have doubtleſs broke all com-"munication between us, and oppoſe thy "attempts to ſee me.—It is time—let "me uſe my laſt reſource."

Her mother was ignorant what reſource ſhe meant; I knew it, and I dreaded the explanation. Henrietta ſent to beg of her mother a moment's converſation alone, having important things to communicate. My ſiſter was deſirous I ſhould be preſent

at this interview with her daughter. I judged that Henrietta was going to declare her ſituation to her mother: what a cruel reply had ſhe to expect! I however conſented, and, to leave them free, hid myſelf in an adjoining cloſet.

Madame St. Forlaix, not ſuſpecting the confeſſion her daughter had prepared for her, had determined, but without telling me her deſign, to acquaint her with the dreadful end of her lover.

Henrietta appeared; an air of humiliation, not common to her, was diffuſed over her whole perſon; her eyes were caſt down, her hands joined together. It was apparent ſhe had been in tears.

"You are come very opportunely, "daughter; I was going to ſeek you: I have "very intereſting things to ſay to you."

"The

" The ſame deſign, Madam, led me " hither; I entreat you to hear me."

" You uſed to call me, *Mamma*, Hen- " rietta."

" You will ſoon judge whether you " ought to permit me to call you ſtill by " a name ſo dear." At theſe words Henrietta threw herſelf at her mother's feet, and wept.

My ſiſter raiſed her precipitately; " My " dear daughter, what diſcourſe! why " this attitude?"

" It becomes what I am going to tell " you."

" You

" You terrify me, my dear child! what
" ſad preſage! of what are you going to
" ſpeak to me?"

" Of a man whom I adore; of Monſ.
" Corſange. Ah, could you doubt it?
" You ſaw our firſt tenderneſs begin, and
" did not oppoſe it. You raiſed no ob-
" ſtacles to my deſires, till they were be-
" come unconquerable. My love for
" Monſ. Corſange is at its height. It is
" now too late to endeavor to hinder its
" progreſs. It is ſtill leſs poſſible for me
" to think of forgetting him: this paſſion
" is more powerful than I am, and I ſhould
" in vain make ſo arduous an attempt. I
" feel in a different manner from others.
" I am not guilty of that exceſs which
" nature has given to all my ſenſations.
" I can feel no paſſion but with violence;

" to

" to me only thoſe paſſions are inſurmount-
" able.

" This, Madam, is the ſtate of my heart:
" it is you who are to weigh the conſe-
" quences; and to doom me either to
" death, or to the higheſt felicity.

" In other circumſtances, my child," ſaid Madam St. Forlaix, " I ſhould per-
" haps have remonſtrated to you, that our
" inclinations are always to be conquered,
" if we will take pains to reſiſt them; and
" that you ought to have oppoſed to them,
" my authority, and the prohibition under
" which I laid you to encourage his love.
" But now, that I expect of you the no-
" bleſt efforts, I ought alſo to furniſh you
" with the moſt effectual arms. If I op-
" poſed no obſtacles to your growing paſ-
" ſion, it was becauſe your attachment

" appeared

" appeared to me ſuch a one as I could
" not condemn. I did not wiſh to de-
" ſtroy thoſe hopes which coincided with
" my own views: I only wiſhed to defer
" the completion of them. But a total
" change has taken place. The circum-
" ſtances which once favored the union
" of our families are paſt. You muſt
" abſolutely forget Corſange; you muſt,
" my Henrietta: I will myſelf aſſiſt you
" in this attempt. If the flattering hope
" which you too early conceived renders
" it difficult, the arguments which I ſhall
" uſe, the reaſons which make this for-
" getfulneſs indiſpenſable, when I have
" told them to you, will at one view re-
" move every difficulty."

Henrietta here raiſed her eyes to her mother; ſhe regarded her fixedly, and ſmiled

ſmiled like ſorrow conſcious of being offended.

"Madam," reſumed ſhe, "I entreat "you to believe, that the love which is be- "come abſolutely maſter of my ſoul, did "not obtain this empire without having "experienced the ſevereſt reſiſtance from "my virtue. It is not without the moſt "violent conflicts that I have determined "to cheriſh for ever the paſſion which "devours me. You ſpeak to me of "indiſpenſable motives; but be aſſured, "I have much ſtronger than yours, what- "ever they may be, never to forget the "lover to whom you refuſe to give me. "*You* depend on my acquieſcence to *your* "reaſons; *I* on the neceſſity of your con- "ſent, when you know *mine*."

Madame St. Forlaix (ſoft, tranquil, and a mother, to this moment) here loſt the gentleneſs

tleneſs of her manner; ſhe loaded her daughter with menaces and reproaches, whilſt the countenance of Henrietta ſuffered not the leaſt apparent alteration.

" Unworthy daughter!" ſaid ſhe, " is it " thus you return the kindneſſes I have " heaped on you? You attach yourſelf, " without my conſent, againſt my com- " mands, to the moſt vile, the moſt baſe " of mankind, to a wretch who does not " merit to breathe the air — love then — " love the ſhame, the diſgrace, of his " family — let him be alſo yours — love " him — but, no — the deluſion is paſt!

" Whatever is the pretended violence of " your criminal paſſions, I can in one " moment reduce them under the yoke of " reaſon and of duty. I will at leaſt de- " ſtroy the hope which ſtill binds them " to

" to the villain who is their infamous ob-
" ject."

" Overwhelm him as you pleaſe with
" injuries and outrages," replied Henrietta with a feigned coldneſs of manner: " I
" have only one word to ſay; Heaven has
" made him my huſband, he has rendered
" me a mother."

" Great God!—'Tis well, Henrietta—
" 'tis well—he is dead—he is dead—and
" by the hand of the executioner."

What a clap of thunder! Henrietta was ſtanding: at this dreadful ſound, her face was covered with a mortal paleneſs. Her eyes grew dim, they cloſed—ſhe ſtaggered, ſhe fell ſenſeleſs on the floor. Her mother was in the ſame ſtate—no help was at hand; I divided my cares between them.

My

My ſiſter came firſt to herſelf. She raiſed her eyes to Heaven, ſhe ſighed, ſhe exclaimed. "Oh! my brother, what has ſhe "told me!"

Fortunately the noiſe brought ſome of the ſervants; my ſiſter was carried to bed; and I took care myſelf of Henrietta. During an hour, we thought her dead. She at length breathed a ſigh; ſhe opened her eyes, her looks were wild and diſordered; her face was from time to time flushed with the deepeſt red, but ſhe ſoon reſumed her firſt paleneſs. Convulſions were the only ſigns ſhe gave of life. She continued in the ſtate I have deſcribed till this morning. I paſſed part of the night in her apartment, and the reſt in that of her mother.

The ſorrow of the latter, which was undoubtedly much leſs violent, ſooner found a vent.

a vent. Henrietta has not once opened her lips. My ſiſter repeated to me without ceaſing, " *He has rendered me a mo-* " *ther!—he is my huſband!*—the huſband " of my daughter!—"

She added to theſe words every expreſſion that deſpair could dictate. " A fa- " mily noble, and unſpotted like ours," ſaid ſhe, " will be for ever ſtained by the " crime of the moſt infamous of men!"

I in vain repreſented to her that his crime was a ſecret; that this marriage was unknown, except to ourſelves; that the puniſhment would fall on her who was alone culpable. She would liſten to no conſolation. Her ſoul was no longer awake to any thing but the miſery which tormented it.

Her

Her phyſician arrived this morning. He found her in a violent fever, and has ordered her to be kept quiet. He does not allow even me to ſpeak to her.

As I came out of her chamber, I was told that Henrietta, who had ſent away her attendants, deſired to ſee me. I flew to her. She was pale, the traces of recent convulſions were on her countenance. She raiſed her head a little at my approach, and looked at me ſtedfaſtly —

" Do you ſtill weep?" ſaid ſhe.

" Alas! my dear child, who could ſee " you without being ſoftened?"

" I am very criminal!"

" But

" But you are ſtill more unhappy."

" You have then ſenſibility, my dear " uncle!" ſaid ſhe, tenderly preſſing my hand.

I took hers, and carried it to my heart — " My dear niece, misfortune, but eſpecial- " ly yours, can never loſe its rights on " my ſoul."

After an inſtant of ſilence, ſhe proceeded: " Is it true, Sir, what they told me " yeſterday?"

" Ah! my dear Henrietta, think of " your health. Why will you ſeek to add " to your ſorrows?"

" It

" It is then true — he is dead — and " what a death! Yet he was my huſband, " and has rendered me a mother."

She ſtopped, ſhe regarded me with a timid air: " You are my father, and my " friend," ſaid ſhe: " I may bluſh before " you, but let me have no other witneſs " of my ſhame." — At theſe words, ſhe ſhewed me her child, of whom ſhe had been delivered in the abſence of her women. Without the ſhock he had undergone, he might perhaps have lived; he ſtill breathed, but he died a moment after in my arms.

" I am a mother," ſaid the unhappy Henrietta, in a voice broken and interrupted, " and *mine* is not here to ſuccour

" me! —

" me!—my lover, my huſband, is dead—
" my infant expires—and I ſtill live!"

My heart was too much oppreſſed during this dreadful ſcene, to let me pronounce one ſingle word. When I attempted to ſpeak, my groans were ready to ſuffocate me. I ſtrove to ſuppreſs my ſorrow before Henrietta, leſt I ſhould increaſe hers. I wiſhed to be alone, to give free courſe to my tears.

She perceived my ſtruggle. " Do not
" conſtrain yourſelf, my dear uncle," ſaid ſhe; " you do not know the effect which
" your ſenſibility has upon me: weep;
" let your tears cauſe mine to flow. I have
" not leſs occaſion than you to ſhed them."

As ſoon as I recovered a little from the grief which rent my ſoul, I thought of taking

the child's body from his unhappy mother. She entreated me firſt to allow her one laſt embrace.

I would have refuſed her, but the ſtrong marks of deſpair that appeared on her countenance forced me to comply. She took him in her arms, looked on him a long time without ſpeaking, bathed him with her tears, kiſſed his cold lips, pronouncing the name of Corſange, gave him back to me, and turned haſtily to the other ſide.

From this time ſhe ſeemed tranquil, and this calm is not yet paſſed; but I believe her ſoul is only fatigued, and has loſt nothing of its native violence. Your mother continues ſtill in the ſame ſtate.

Henrietta

Henrietta is not eaſy a moment without me: ſhe aſks me continually whether my heart grows more and more ſenſible; and it really does. No extraordinary affection had ever made my heart feel ſtrongly, and I fancied it not ſuſceptible. I had even the vanity to attribute to the efforts of my philoſophy this pretended repoſe of mind. If I have indeed ſurmounted ſome light and feeble emotions, it is becauſe I have never before been witneſs to thoſe terrible ſcenes which unbind and awaken every dormant ſenſation of the ſoul. I have dearly learnt the true ſtate of mine. The ſight of the unhappy is the true touchſtone of ſenſibility.

The day after you left us to join your regiment, Germain came hither. He was anxious about Philip, whom you left here ſick. I took him aſide; and ſhewed him

Corſange's letter. He bluſhed at ſeeing it, and fell on his knees. I underſtood him, and aſſured him of your diſcretion and my own.

I was however of opinion, he ſhould conceal from Monſ. D'Ornance our knowledge of his misfortunes, leſt it ſhould add to his affliction.

What a life does this reſpectable man lead at preſent! For ever abſorbed in ſorrow, all around him, far from diverting his ideas from this ſubject, only ſerve continually to renew his affliction.

O Julia! ſtill more unhappy, who haſt loſt in one moment a brother, a huſband, honor, and every hope of happineſs!—Her mother, at leaſt, gave her ſome conſolation; deſpair has ſnatched her away in the moſt

moſt cruel manner. Her father alone remains; but ſhe cannot throw herſelf into his parental boſom, without finding it bathed in tears.

Which way ſoever I turn, my eyes meet no objects but thoſe of miſery.

Adieu! What ſorrows have ſucceeded our flattering hopes! I have not however loſt the proſpect of your happineſs: but give me ſome relaxation; I am not at preſent in a ſtate to attend to it.

DE PRELL.

LETTER XLIX.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at St. Forlaix.

SO many accumulated misfortunes ſeem to deſtroy each other. Yes, my dear uncle, I have loſt that ſenſibility which rendered my ſoul ſo keenly alive to the leaſt vexation. There remains to me only what is neceſſary to enable me to pity others who are unhappy. I no longer feel thoſe evils which regard myſelf only. I have no longer the leaſt expectation, the leaſt hope of felicity. Of what importance is it then to be removed from it a ſtep further? I am only affected at the ſufferings

ſufferings of ſuch as have yet a right to pretend to happineſs.

In the ſtate of mind I have deſcribed, could I have believed my ſoul ſtill ſuſceptible of affliction and regret! Ah! Sir, this poor Germain has then been the victim of my blindneſs! I have done him injuſtice. He was an honeſt man, and I did not ſcruple to ſuſpect him. I ſhould have bluſhed to impute this crime to the unworthy Corſange, and yet I drove away with ignominy this faithful old man who was ſo ſincerely attached to me — I can never pardon myſelf this action.

My dear uncle, I owe him many excuſes: make them for me, I entreat you. I bluſh for having been guilty of an act of injuſtice, and not having repaired it. He was my domeſtic; but I have wronged

him, and am at preſent below him. We are at leaſt equals. The greateſt of human beings is he who beſt fulfils his duties.

Is honor the queſtion? Germain has a right to pretend to as much as myſelf. I have ſullied his, and ought to reſtore it pure and without ſtain.

Inform me what is become of Julia ſince the death of Madame D'Ornance, of that tender mother, who merited a better fate! I have loſt the hope of poſſeſſing her, but ſhe is not leſs the object of my adoration.

I am as much intereſted as ever in all that relates to her. Muſt I then ſee her no more? ſhall I be diſhonored by ſeeking even her friendſhip? Fatal and barbarous prejudice! which renders virtue reſponſible for the offences ſhe cannot prevent!

What

What have I to do with the crimes of which *ſhe* is not guilty, and which her ſoul abhors? 'Tis of importance to me to find the woman I love virtuous; but I am not equally intereſted to find thoſe ſo whom chance has united to her by blood. Will our nation ever be, of all others, the moſt enlightened, and the moſt weak? will it ever have the cleareſt perception of reaſon and truth, and the ſtrongeſt fear of obeying their dictates?

I extremely pity the unhappy Henrietta. She is undoubtedly very culpable; but ſhe has been hurried away by her paſſions, and her puniſhment has been a ſevere one.

Let us hide from all eyes the ſhame which ſhe has juſtly incurred: a ſhame, the greater as the object of it was more criminal.

I ſee only one choice left for her, if ſhe recovers. How painful will it be to a ſoul, to whom the hurry, the variety, of lively ſenſations is neceſſary! But it is the only one remaining to her. Her crime has ſeparated her from the world: ſhe ought therefore to renounce it.

I am very anxious in regard to the health of my mother. I know the ſenſibility of her ſoul, and how much this misfortune muſt have affected her. Be careful of her, my dear uncle: I cannot ſupport ſo many loſſes at a time.

I have received ſeveral letters from Madame D'Eſſ— ſince I have been here. I have anſwered none of them. I burnt the two or three firſt without reading. I

at

at laſt determined to ſend them back. I hope this humiliation will correct her folly.

Adieu! my dear Sir! You know how much I am intereſted in all you may have to ſay to me.

In the preſent languid ſtate of my ſoul, it is ſcarce agitated, except by a kind of gloomy reſtleſſneſs and inquietude which you alone can calm.

I am, &c.

ST. FORLAIX.

LETTER L.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at the Head Quarters.

St. Forlaix.

THE ſeal of my letter preſages to you a new misfortune. Prepare your ſoul for it. Ill-fated young man! you have loſt the hope of poſſeſſing an adored miſtreſs; and it is in the moment when your heart is abſorbed in an affliction ſo exquiſite, that it is to be ſtabbed by another loſs not leſs touching. You have not even the ſad conſolation of reſerving all your ſorrow for your Julia. She muſt partake

partake it with the memory of your mother — you no longer have one.

Yeſterday, her mind ever employed on her daughter, my ſiſter ordered me to be called to her. The phyſician, who had found her fever very high, had at firſt forbid my being admitted; but ſhe felt her laſt moment approaching, and inſiſted on ſeeing me.

"My dear brother," ſaid ſhe, as ſoon as we were alone, "I have but a few hours "to live. I accuſe only myſelf for the ſtate "I am in. If I had followed your ad- "vice, I had prevented many misfortunes; "I did not do it, and I am puniſhed for "it. I have, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, "forced my daughter to be culpable. I "ought to have known her better, and "to have indulged her choice. She is "diſhonored.

"diſhonored. I cannot ſurvive her ſhame; "but I pardon her.—My brother, I "would ſee her."

"She cannot come hither," ſaid I: "but "fear nothing on her account: her fate "is decided." I then informed her of her ſituation, and of all that had paſſed.

"Heaven is good, as well as juſt," ſaid ſhe ſighing: "our ſhame expires "with me. But I would ſee my child. "My dear brother, let me be carried into "her apartment."

I endeavored, but in vain, to diſſuade her. The phyſician determined me to comply, by taking from me all hope of her life.

I went firſt, to prepare Henrietta for this melancholy viſit. She liſtened to me without

without replying, dreſſed herſelf decently on her bed, roſe at her mother's approach, and, in ſpite of all my efforts to prevent it, threw herſelf on her knees before her. She kiſſed her hands; proſtrated her face on the floor, and then raiſed it bathed in tears. The moſt violent ſorrow was apparent in her whole air. She would have ſpoke, but was unable to pronounce a ſingle word.

Madame St. Forlaix, in her turn, raiſed her head, and embraced her daughter: "Do not let my preſence make thee bluſh, "my dear child," ſaid ſhe: "I do not "come to afflict thee; I am almoſt as "culpable as thou art. My negligence "and rigor have precipitated thy de- "ſtruction. Pardon them, as I do thee. "I will not reproach thee with the offence "that hurries me to the grave. Thou wilt

"live

" live a prey to remorſe; thou art a thou-
" ſand times more to be pitied than I am.

" Henrietta, let us forget our mutual
" faults. But we are not the only perſons
" offended. There is a God, the avenger
" of crimes, and towards him we have
" been guilty. Let us endeavor to ap-
" peaſe him. This God, who puniſhes,
" is alſo the God who pardons. I go
" firſt to appear before him.

" Henrietta, let me with mine offer up
" to him alſo thy repentance. Conſecrate
" to him thy laſt days. Alas! they are
" no longer a ſacrifice worthy of him. He
" is the only one who will not diſdain the
" homage. I afflict thee, dear Henrietta;
" ſorrow is henceforth thy portion. I feel
" myſelf grow weak. My child, embrace
" me. Let this kiſs be that of peace. It

" is my laſt adieu. Receive at the ſame
" time my laſt ſigh."

At theſe words Henrietta, till now immoveable, claſped her mother in her arms. Her eyes, but with difficulty, let fall ſome tears; ſhe ſeemed to ſeek the expiring breath on the mouth of her unhappy mother: my ſiſter made a laſt effort once more to behold her child; preſſed her hand feebly, turned away her head, and died.

Henrietta roſe up—" My huſband, my
" ſon, and my mother!" cried ſhe, raiſing her eyes to Heaven—ſhe then fell on the bed in a ſwoon. I called the ſervants. What a dreadful ſpectacle! A miſtreſs idolized by her family, extended without life; her daughter dying by her ſide; their hands ſtill joined together. This ſight would have drawn tears from the moſt inſenſible.

They

They ſeparated them; it was two hours before Henrietta returned to life. She looked wildly round her. During ſome moments the ſtrongeſt horror was impreſſed on her countenance: but ſhe ſtill continued to maintain a ſad and gloomy ſilence. Since that dreadful moment, ſighs have been her only language. The ſtrength of her conſtitution ſupports her, and prevents her ſinking entirely under ſo many repeated ſtrokes. She begins now to ſit up a few hours every day, and to give a becoming attention to her habits and appearance.

She has ſome deſign of which ſhe has not informed us. She will attend on herſelf; when any one approaches her, ſhe is diſpleaſed; when they ſpeak, ſhe appears doubly diſtreſſed.

You will imagine how inſupportable this houſe muſt be to me at preſent. I experience moments of the moſt excruciating ſorrow. The firſt tears I ever ſhed, now fill my eyes: they ſwell my heart; they ſtop my reſpiration. How different is this ſtate from that which is natural to me, and which I have taken ſuch pains to preſerve! I can no longer ſupport it. I ſhall ſet out to-morrow for Paris. My preſence there is neceſſary to the regulation of your affairs. Monſ. De l'Etang, who yet poſſeſſes his underſtanding entire, will take the care of thoſe of this family.

Adieu! I do not expect you to be comforted, but to live. You have loſt all: you have no other misfortune to apprehend.

P. S.

P. S. I come this moment from the caſtle of Ornance. Germain only is at preſent there. Julia and her father have diſappeared. Their domeſtics are diſcharged; the affairs of their family ſettled. They have entruſted Germain with full powers, and are gone from Ornance: in the intention, without doubt, of burying their deſpair in the ſolitude and ſilence of ſome of their diſtant eſtates. I did not interrogate this faithful domeſtic on the place of their retreat. It is a ſecret to all the world but him. I would not afflict him, by laying him under the neceſſity of refuſing me.

This event breaks in on my deſigns. I had entertained a hope that Julia's virtues might have impoſed ſilence on

on prejudice itſelf. Why, if ſhe was your wife, ſhould the infamy of her brother be oftener remembered than her own glory? The luſtre of the one ought totally to efface the ignominy of the other; ſince the honor due to her virtues is her own, and the ſhame of her brother independent of her. But we muſt think no more of this. Her abſence takes from me all hope.

I ſhewed Germain all that regarded him in your letter. He was confuſed, ſoftened; he wept, and kiſſed my hand.

"Let your nephew reſtore me his "eſteem," cried he: "'tis all the "reparation I deſire: when the world "knows I have the honor to be "eſteemed by ſuch a man as Monſ.

"St.

"St. Forlaix, they will be ſufficiently "convinced I am an honeſt man."

I praiſed his ſentiments. You have both acted as you ought.

Adieu!

DE PRELE.

LET-

LETTER LI.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at the Head Quarters.

Paris.

WHEN ready to ſet out for Paris, I went into the apartment of Henrietta, to bid her adieu. She was adorned, though in mourning, in the moſt pleaſing manner — modeſty and ſorrow ſpoke in her countenance; both contributed to render her more lovely. She advanced to me: I embraced her; ſhe obliged me to ſeat myſelf by her.

After a moment's ſilence, "My dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, "you have been witneſs of my "misfortunes,

" misfortunes, of my ſufferings; you can
" judge of the pangs which have tortured
" my ſoul. This houſe has ſeen them com-
" mence, has ſeen them increaſe: it has
" been their cradle; it ſhall never be their
" grave. There is nothing here which
" does not continually remind me of my
" paſt happineſs, of that time when love
" walked hand in hand with innocence —
" of thoſe moments when a mother's ap-
" proving ſmiles —

" I can no longer ſupport ſo cruel a
" remembrance. I have no longer a mo-
" ther; I have myſelf plunged a dagger
" in her boſom!

" Let me at leaſt reſpect her dying
" wiſh; it is too conſonant to my own, to
" leave me any merit in complying with
" it. You heard, Sir, ſhe entreated me to
" quit

" quit the world — *ſhe felt* that I was un-
" worthy of ſociety, *I feel* that ſociety is
" become hateful to me.

" I had a mother, a huſband, a ſon —
" all, all, are taken from me — what re-
" mains then to me on earth?"

The tears, which here ſtopped her voice, took from her the power of proceeding. Her tears excited mine: I ſhed them in abundance. She appeared extremely affected by them. She took my hand, and preſſed it in hers: " My friend, my father," ſaid ſhe, " you are become very dear to
" me. I feel that I ſhall regret you; but
" I feel alſo that you cannot ſupply the
" place to me of all which I have loſt.
" My brother muſt hate me; I am the
" cauſe of his misfortune — he will forget

" me ſoon; 'tis what I ought to expect
" of him.

" But you, Sir, you will not ſoon forget
" me; you will reflect that my ſufferings
" firſt awakened this ſenſibility of your
" ſoul. You will love me, however un-
" worthy I have rendered myſelf of your
" affection: you will never ſee me, but you
" will think often of me: I ſhall be per-
" ſuaded of this, and the idea will be an
" alleviation to my afflictions. Ah! my
" dear uncle, 'tis the only one I can now
" hope for!"

My ſoul, oppreſſed, was unable to hear more. I held her a long time to my boſom. " My dear child," ſaid I to her, " your deſires are too juſt, not to be ſa-
" tisfied. But why will you take from
" me the pleaſure of ſeeing and conſoling
" you?

" you? If I am now all that is dear to
" you in the world, if I am the only one
" who can ſoften your ſorrows, why will
" you give up this conſolation, by an eter-
" nal abſence? You have but one re-
" ſource againſt your afflictions, and you
" would deprive yourſelf of that for
" ever."

" My dear Sir," replied Henrietta, " I
" have committed a very great crime:
" the longeſt, the moſt profound repent-
" ance, can alone expiate it in the ſight of
" the Supreme Being: to that repentance
" I ought to deliver myſelf entirely: your
" converſation would be too ſoft, too en-
" dearing, not to eſtrange me from this
" duty. The idea of being ſtill beloved
" by you, the only conſolation I expect,
" is alſo the only one I will allow myſelf.

" I will devote my time to my God, that " he may deſtroy, that he may pardon, " this fatal paſſion. I will think of you, " in order to deteſt it."

I embraced Henrietta, and raiſed myſelf, in order to put an end to a ſcene ſo painful to my heart. We left St. Forlaix together. It was her deſire not to enter into any convent in the neighbourhood. She was ſtill leſs inclined to accompany me to the capital: the very idea of Paris was hateful to her. I placed her therefore in the convent of ——, which ſhe herſelf made choice of. We took the moſt tender adieu! She compelled me to promiſe I would neither think of ſeeing or of writing to her; and I left her.

Adieu!

Adieu! then, unhappy, and too amiable girl! in the midſt of the world, yet dead to its ſociety; without the *hope*, not even allowed the *wiſh*, to re enter it! The error of a moment, an involuntary paſſion, which, at leaſt at her age, it is difficult to command, has conducted her into this tomb of real exiſtence, and left her nothing of life but its miſeries. The dreadful idea of giving her up to this ſpecies of annihilation freezes my ſoul with horror.

" What then, Monſ. De Prele, is be-
" come of that ſoft tranquillity, which
" made you ſee all events with indifference?
" You regarded the affections as preju-
" dices which we ought to deſpiſe; and
" during the laſt month, you have been
" every day in tears. Sorrow has reſumed

" its rights over you, and has reſumed them " with tyranny — you have felt grief, be- " cauſe your ſocial affections have at " length found an object."

I was undoubtedly right when I endeavored to conquer this ſentiment, when I aſſerted that friendſhip was an enemy to the calm ſunſhine of the ſoul. I have ſtudied the human heart, and am convinced that, in order to be happy, we ought to fly ſenſibility; but I am equally convinced that this effort, however wiſe, is impoſſible. I have experienced all its miſeries. Alas! had I ſooner indulged the ſocial propenſity of my temper, I might alſo have taſted its ſweetneſs!

Adieu! my friend! I regret your Julia as much as you do. Why am I to loſe her at the moment when ſhe is moſt dear to my

my heart? I will ſee her, we will mutually conſole each other. She ſtill loves you; ſhe is incapable of changing — Ah! if ſome day — but we muſt no longer indulge theſe pleaſing hopes!

Adieu!

DE PAUL.

LETTER LII.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

From the Head Quarters.

MY moſt ardent wiſh, on receiving your two laſt letters, was, that the only anſwer to them might be the news of my death. Fate has decided otherwiſe: it has taken from me even this reſource. I am condemned to live, in order to ſuffer. I am not allowed to ſeek an end of my miſeries. But it is proper you ſhould know what has paſſed, and the perſon to whom I am ſo unhappily obliged.

I walked

I walked yeſterday out of my tent, buried in the profoundeſt meditation, which led me inſenſibly to the leaſt frequented part of the camp. I heard, a few paces from me, behind a tent, two ſoldiers who talked with great warmth.

"I deſpiſe your reaſonings," ſaid one of them; "you are a coward, ſince you re-"fuſe to fight: for my part, I never rea-"ſon but with my ſword."

"I am not a coward," replied the other; "but, as it is not you whom it im-"ports me to convince of this, I ought "not to diſobey the laws of the land, and "offend military diſcipline, by fighting "with you on ſuch a frivolous occaſion. I "have given you no affront: what ſatis-"faction then do you aſk of me?"

"If there were no cauſe but this, is it "not an inſult to me, that, being my "comrade, you ſhould want courage? All "our company ſhall ſoon know it; and "there is not a ſoldier in the regiment "who will ſpeak to you."

"Once more: it is of very little conſe-"quence to me what idea they have of "me. They will avoid me, you ſay: "that is exactly what I wiſh; and this "you know is the only ſubject of our "quarrel."

"But will our officers have a better "idea of you? and can you ſuffer—"

"I ſhall be very far from ſuffering "what you ſuppoſe.—But my behaviour

"on

" on the firſt occaſion ſhall ſhew which of
" us two has the moſt real courage."

" Do you know," ſaid the ſoldier with fury, " that I grow tired of hearing you;
" and that, if you don't draw your ſword
" directly, I ſhall take another method?"

I thought it now full time for me to appear. The man who inſiſted on fighting, fled at my approach: the other, far from endeavoring to avoid me, advanced, made me a reſpectful bow, and ſtopped to examine me attentively. I obſerved him in my turn. He ſeemed about forty, of a fine height, a noble countenance, though extremely lean: his air grave, and even a little ſevere. I aſked him the occaſion of his quarrel with the ſoldier: " Leſs than
" nothing", ſaid he; " it does not merit
" my Colonel's attention."

" I would, however, know it."

" It is but a ſhort time, Sir, that I " have had the honor to belong to you. " Reaſons, which you will permit me to " conceal, have induced me to enter into " the ſervice at this age. As I do not " mean to receive pay, I thought I might " at my choice ſeparate myſelf from my " comrades, when my duty did not " oblige me to be with them. They " perceived that their ſociety diſpleaſed me. " They complained to me of this. I diſ- " ſipated the idea they had entertained of " my treating them with contempt. I " aſſured them, the ſorrow in which they " muſt have obſerved me always plunged, " was the only cauſe of my ſeeking to " be alone; that I fled equally all ſociety: " that I entreated them to ſuffer me to

" continue

" continue this manner of life. Some " money, joined to this requeſt, ſatisfied " them; and they left me. The ſoldier " whom you ſaw undoubtedly thought " himſelf more offended than the reſt. He " demanded of me a kind of ſatisfaction " which I believed it my duty to refuſe " him. Your preſence terminated the " quarrel."

" I have heard all that has paſſed," ſaid I; " and I approve your conduct. But can- " not you inform me of ſome things " which aſtoniſh me, and awaken my cu- " riofity?

" You have engaged without receiving " pay; without accepting the uſual ſub- " ſiſtence of a ſoldier. You have then " fortune ſufficient to live without it?

" Your

" Your air, your language, prove you
" too well born, for your preſent ſituation.
" You are of an age too ripe, to ſuffer
" me to ſuſpect you of any indiſcretion.
" Add to this, the ſorrow which you
" avow, and which you tell me is the
" cauſe of your ſeeking that ſolitude to
" which the military profeſſion is not very
" favorable. What reaſons could you
" then have to make it your choice?"

" If I was capable of deceiving you,
replied the ſoldier, " it would be eaſy for
" me to amuſe you with an invented tale.
" But all evaſions are unworthy of me.
" I know my Colonel is too diſcreet and
" generous to expect of me confeſſions
" which it is impoſſible for me to make.
" All I am at liberty to ſay is, that my
" birth

" birth is ſuch as would have entitled
" me to take, even in the military ſtate
" which it is abſolutely neceſſary for me
" to embrace, a much more elevated rank
" than that which I have choſen. But this
" rank itſelf is one of the reaſons which
" obliges me to ſilence. If there was a
" degree lower than that of a ſoldier, which
" at the ſame time permitted me to riſe
" as high, I ſhould prefer it. Pardon me
" if I explain myſelf no further. Believe
" me, Sir, the reaſons for my ſilence muſt
" be very important, ſince they hinder
" my opening myſelf to the man in the
" world whom I think moſt worthy of my
" confidence."

I no longer inſiſted.—I confeſs to you, this man aſtoniſhes me. His underſtanding, his virtue, every quality which raiſes him

him above his ſituation, inſpires me with eſteem, and even friendſhip for him.

"Since it is proper I ſhould continue "ignorant of your reaſons," ſaid I, "I will "not endeavor to diſcover them. But al- "low me to aſk you one queſtion. Are "you ſo ſtrongly attached to the rank of "a ſoldier, that you would refuſe to quit "it, if I offered you one more elevated? "That of Quarter-maſter, for example, by "placing you above your preſent equals, "would diſpenſe with you from living "with them, and bring you nearer thoſe "whoſe birth and education are more con- "ſonant to your own."

"Whatever can render me more wor- "thy the notice of my Colonel," ſaid he, "I eſteem a happineſs: 'tis the only ad- "vantage

" vantage to which I aſpire. This is, how-
" ever, the only ſtep I will owe to favor.
" There is no rank ſo elevated to which
" I have not a right to pretend; but it
" is by the road of honor I will arrive at
" it."

" You are my Quarter-maſter," ſaid I, embracing him affectionately; and he was the following day received as ſuch at the head of my company, which I ordered for that purpoſe under arms. I deſired to ſee his firſt returns; without giving any reaſon for this caprice, he requeſted me with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to diſpenſe with it till he had got them tranſcribed. I was ſo much accuſtomed to his refuſals, that I willingly abſtained from aſking him any queſtion which it could poſſibly be diſagreable to him to anſwer.

Theſe

Theſe particulars may give you ſome idea of my friend. I ſhall ſoon paint him in much more brilliant colors.

I had received your two dreadful letters: I took the reſolution not to ſurvive ſuch repeated misfortunes. The ſecond and moſt cruel of theſe letters arrived the day we were to give battle. I determined then to ſeek the death I wiſhed: when the two armies were ſufficiently near each other, a detachment of light horſe advanced to begin the engagement; they attacked the wing where I was placed. Attentive to my purpoſe, inſtead of making to myſelf a rampart of my companions, I oppoſed myſelf to the enemy, repulſed, and purſued them: my eagerneſs carried me out of the ranks; I was already far from the body of the army. Some friends, who had followed

lowed me, had fallen by my ſide. I had myſelf received many wounds. My horſe fell under me. Thoſe who ſurrounded me endeavored to take me alive. They ſucceeded; the fall of my horſe and my weakneſs had robbed me of the hope of falling ſword in hand: when another troop mixed amongſt thoſe who had ſeized me, diſperſed them, delivered me from their hands, and remounted me before I could know to whom I was obliged for this aſſiſtance. Three men only had atchieved this ſpecies of prodigy. One of them was my ſoldier.

"What do you here?" ſaid he: "it "becomes you thus raſhly to ſeek death, "when the Army, the King, the State, have "occaſion for you! Haſten to your ſol- "diers: leave the reſt to me."

The

The troop from which I had eſcaped, compoſed of about twenty men, were already returned. My ſoldier remained alone. He oppoſed himſelf to all their efforts. He forced me to fly towards our army; he ſtopped all thoſe who would have purſued me, and did not give way till he ſaw me out of danger, carrying off at the ſame time one of their colors.

The retreat ſounded, I was put to bed. I inſiſted on partaking my tent with my deliverer; he was as dangerouſly wounded as myſelf. We were forbid to ſpeak; but they could not however take from me the pleaſure of having before my eyes the man to whom I was already as ſtrongly attached by friendſhip as by gratitude. He paſſed the night in great agitation, and I heard him often repeat with tranſport,

" O hap-

" O, happineſs! we ought then never to " deſpair of thee!"

Our preſent ſituation weakened for ſome time the idea of our misfortunes, and rendered our wounds more eaſy to heal. My friend's health begins to be re-eſtabliſhed, and I ſhall ſoon think of recompenſing him. My friendſhip for him becomes every day more lively. He appears to have as tender an affection for me; and, whatever is the cauſe, I feel that I am flattered by it. If he does not remove my ſorrows, he at leaſt aſſiſts me to diminiſh their bitterneſs. Ah! my dear Sir! the longer I live, the more misfortunes I feel, the leſs I am of your opinion in reſpect to friendſhip. You regret Julia, becauſe you think ſhe would have conſoled you; and you ſtill aſſert that we ought not to ſuffer ourſelves to love any thing.

Julia!

Julia! that name ſo dear to me — why did my remembrance!—Alas! that adored name will never be abſent one moment from my thoughts.

Adieu!

St. Forlaix.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at the Head Quarters.

Paris.

NO reaſons leſs powerful than thoſe you have given me, could have induced me to pardon your ſilence: your letter has relieved me from an anxiety which began to be very painful. It is not yet entirely calmed. Your chagrin alarms me. I know, to my misfortune, how dangerous this poiſon is. Neglect no occaſion of diſſipating theſe gloomy ideas. Your new friend is a reſource with which Heaven has

has in its goodneſs preſented you. Even ſhould this connexion expoſe you to new misfortunes, they will be always leſs to be apprehended than thoſe which they will help you to forget.

This morning, juſt as I was going out, they told me a lady, who did not ſend in her name, deſired to ſee me.

A tall woman, whoſe perſon appeared well made and graceful, through the diſguiſe of an immenſe gauze hood, which hid half her figure, entered the room. She was in black, without being in mourning; and was dreſſed with as much elegance and grace as modeſty and ſimplicity. As ſoon as we were alone, ſhe raiſed the hood which veiled her—gueſs who!—it was Madame D'Eſt—!

" Good God! is it you, Madam? why " this funereal habit? is it poſſible? no dia- " monds?—no *red?* or ſo little? —what " misfortune has happened to you?"

" Alas! Sir! what would you have of " me? All things paſs away in this world, " and pleaſure with the reſt. I had, you " know, a diſtinguiſhed rank at court. " I had friends. I was powerful. Nothing " of all that remains. One of my greateſt " protectors has deſerted me; others ſoon " followed him. I found myſelf reduced " to four or five, who have not the " moiety of the credit I myſelf had there " ſix months ago. What ſhall I ſay to " you?—Caprice, if you will, on my " ſide—intrigues, jealouſies, on the other—, " in ſhort, I am diſgraced: 'tis in vain to " ſoften the word.

" is very ungrateful, this little nephew " of yours: but let us leave that ſubject; it " is not leſs true that I have been deſerted; " that is, to a certain degree. I believe, " if I had attempted to make other friends " of the ſame kind, I might have ſucceed- " ed; but the credit acquired this way is " with me almoſt worn out, whereas it is " freſh on the ſide which I have choſen. " My new friends are much leſs incon- " ſtant, and full as powerful as the others. " I enter their ſociety at an age which " appears to them eſtimable. I com- " mand on this ſide; I muſt have ſo- " licited on the other. All things con- " ſidered, I believe, I have made an ad- " vantageous exchange?"

" It muſt be confeſſed, Madam, you " have extraordinary reſources in your own " mind; and my nephew was guilty of " great

" great folly, in not doing you all the
" juſtice you have a right to."

" He certainly was. If he had been
" reaſonable, I would have engaged to have
" made him *ſomething*; whereas I ſee
" plainly, in the road he takes, he will
" never riſe above the rank in which I
" have placed him.

" *A propos* to that, Sir, have you any thing
" to ſend to Monſ. De l'Etang? I ſhall very
" ſoon paſs by St. Forlaix. I have juſt
" bought an eſtate two leagues from thence,
" where I mean to ſpend ſome months every
" year. In the ſtate I have choſen, a little
" retreat is neceſſary; and as the place was
" in other reſpects equal to me, I preferred
" taking one in the neighbourhood of your
" family, for which I have the higheſt re-
" gard.

" If your nephew will come to viſit me " when he is at his eſtate, I may give him " very uſeful advice in reſpect to his " advancement. I flatter myſelf he will " now follow it, if he is not ſtill infatuated " with his little D'Ornance. I ſhall al- " ways intereſt myſelf warmly for him; " and he may, if he pleaſes, have the " ſtrongeſt proofs of it."

After more diſcourſe of this nature, of which you were the principal ſubject, Madame D'Eſt—left me. I think her extremely changed, eſpecially in her appearance. Her converſation ſeems to me pretty nearly the ſame. An habitual turn of mind is not eaſily eradicated. What I the leaſt comprehend, is the very little curioſity ſhe expreſſed in reſpect to Julia's place of abode. If ſhe really loves you,

as

as one would ſuppoſe, this indifference is not natural. Behold her however a devotee! What an idea! This poor woman turns herſelf on every ſide, to be, as ſhe expreſſes it, *ſomething*. After all, one cannot but pardon her.

Adieu! Write to me oftener. You know how much your happineſs intereſts me, even in ſpite of myſelf.

Adieu!

DE PRELE.

LETTER LIV.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

From the Head Quarters.

MY deliverer, my friend, has obtained a lieutenancy. I diſcovered in him, through all his ſadneſs, an extreme joy at receiving this commiſſion. I cannot comprehend this, in a man who might of himſelf have commanded the ſame rank, and yet preferred that of a private ſoldier. Is it the glory of the gallant action he has performed which gives him this pleaſure? The reward adds nothing to it: it would not

not have been either leſs honourable, or leſs honored, if it had obtained him nothing; and yet I did not obſerve him at all elated till he was told he was a Lieutenant. This particularity would rather make me ſuſpect him of vanity, if the reſt of his conduct did not contradict that ſuſpicion.

He has quitted the name of La Gloire *, which he aſſumed when he came into the ſervice; and has taken that of Monſ. De Premont, to conceal, as he confeſſed to me, his real name. His heart is ever impenetrable to mine, without my having the leſs affection for him. As I have had ſufficient proofs of his virtue, his prudence, and the goodneſs of his heart, to

* The French ſoldiers always take a new name when they enter into the ſervice, which they call *Le nom de Guerre.*

The French valets have a ſimilar cuſtom.

have no indiſcretion to apprehend on his part, I was going the other day to confide to him a part of my chagrins.

"Stop," ſaid he; "this confidence will "give you a right to a mutual one on my "ſide, which is not in my power."

"No," ſaid I haſtily, "you ſhall be "equally maſter of your own ſecrets. If "I confide mine to you, 'tis only that I "may ſpeak of them. It is becauſe thoſe "ſorrows of which a friend is the depo-"ſitary, loſe half their weight. When "you know my misfortunes, I can talk "to you of them often; and 'tis only by "talking of them that I can familiarize "myſelf to them. As the impreſſion they "have made on me diminiſhes, you will "perceive it; and rejoice, if you love me, "to ſee your friend leſs unhappy."

"But

"But who will aſſure you," ſaid Monſ. De Premont, "that I am incapable "of abuſing your confidence? how do "you know that I may not even have an "intereſt in doing it? In ſhort, you do "not know me; you think yourſelf cer-"tain I ſhall entruſt your ſecrets to no "one, yet have not yourſelf ſtrength of "mind to reſiſt the deſire of entruſting "them to me! Why ſhould I not allow "myſelf to be as imprudent as you? Be-"cauſe, you will ſay, theſe ſecrets are not "mine. But are yours, Sir, indeed all "your own? is it poſſible your misfor-"tunes ſhould affect yourſelf only? and, "if they affect others, are you at liberty "to communicate them to me? I can "believe you would not name the per-"ſons intereſted; that no voluntary in-"diſcretion would point them out to me.

" But you are of a known and illuſtrious " family; if the minuteſt circumſtances " in the events of your life remain ſecret, " they are in general far from being un- " known. The particulars of which you " might inform me, would enable me to " divine others, to which I ought to be a " ſtranger; and diſcover to me names, " which your ſilence would not be ſuf- " ficient to conceal.

" I ſhould thus become maſter of all " your ſecrets, as well as thoſe of many " other perſons, over whom you have no " right, and whom your imprudent con- " fidence would betray. I muſt be a very " honeſt man indeed not to abuſe it. I " repeat to you, Sir, you know me enough " to love me; but to give me your con- " fidence, wait ten years of trial, and

" even

" even at the end of that time tremble at
" delivering yourſelf up to me."

How worthy, my dear uncle, does this tender friend render himſelf of all the affection, all the confidence, of my heart, even in refuſing it! He has however obliged me to confine my ſorrows in my own boſom. You feel yourſelf how neceſſary to an afflicted heart is a friend who knows all its pains, ſince you yourſelf regret Julia.—But why, my dear Sir, have you not made enquiry? why have you not endeavored to diſcover her retreat? She and her reſpectable father are doubtleſs a prey to their afflictions, in ſome remote inhoſpitable deſert. You would be their comforter, their only friend: after misfortunes dreadful as theirs, you are the only one whom they could permit to aſ-

ſume

ſume that tender name; and you abandon them.

Continue at leaſt to be the ſupport of my unhappy ſiſter. Remove the ſhocking idea ſhe has conceived of me. I hate her? I make her reproaches? Let her remember how much I have always loved her; and believe ſhe never was ſo dear to my heart, as ſince ſhe has been ſo worthy of my compaſſion. I would firmly oppoſe the ſtep ſhe intends to take, if I thought ſhe could now take any other. You know my way of thinking, and how little I value riches. The fear of leſſening mine would never engage me to form a wiſh againſt the freedom of a fellow creature.

Young and innocent victims! who fill with your groans the place conſecrated

to

to ſilence! how many amongſt you has avarice ſacrificed! I regard all fathers blinded by their partiality, as barbarians; and all brothers who ſuffer theſe ſacrifices, having it in their power to prevent them, as monſters, who muſt anſwer in the ſight of God, for all the repinings, all the ſacrilegious impatience, of which their cruelty is the cauſe.

Henrietta cannot be placed in this claſs. 'Tis not the will of her parents, but fate, which conſtrains her to the ſtate ſhe means to embrace: whatever may be the hardſhips of this ſtate, is there another which could ſatisfy a mind like hers? would *ſhe* deceive the huſband who wiſhed to make her happy? would *ſhe* offer him a heart which did not firſt ſigh for him? a heart which certainly never would be his?

Alas!

Alas! I feel more ſtrongly than any other, it is but once through life that it is poſſible to love.

Adieu!

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER LV.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at the Head Quarters.

Paris.

I WENT yeſterday to viſit your ſiſter. She perſeveres in her reſolution; ſhe even refuſed to ſee me. I was informed ſhe paſſed all her days retired in her apartment; never appearing but when ſhe is obliged to it, and then with the apparent traces of the moſt bitter ſorrow on her countenance. What a wretched life! All the community are touched with compaſſion at her ſituation; but do not dare to

to aſk her the cauſe. May ſhe ſoon herſelf forget it! or, may the remembrance at leaſt appear to her leſs cruel! This is all my hope: excеſſive grief is only temporary; it ſubſides at length into a penſive melancholy, which gives a kind of calm to the ſoul, to which gaiety is often a ſtranger.

Every heart contains in itſelf the original principles of conſolation, which time will ſooner or later develope. It is then, and then only, that religion and philoſophy are of uſe, to reſiſt and conquer affliction.

As I was going out of the convent, I was ſtopped by a violent ſtorm. I was on horſeback; nothing could ſecure me from the rain. The neareſt hamlet where I could hope for ſhelter was three quarters of a league from the convent. It was the hour when the nuns retire to reſt. They came

came to give me notice to leave the parlor. I entreated leave to ſtay in the church till the rain ceaſed. I obtained a quarter of an hour: it was near expiring; the rain fell in more abundance than before. The night was dark, and the roads dangerous. I was on the point of being exceedingly embarraſſed, when an old man addreſſed me, whoſe polite and gentle appearance could not fail to inſpire confidence and friendſhip. He told me he was the eccleſiaſtick who officiated in the convent, and in the moſt obliging manner offered me an aſylum with him.

I accepted his offer with joy, and accompanied him to a little cottage, as plain and unadorned as it was neat and convevient, which joined to the convent.

"'Tis here," ſaid he to me, "that I "paſs in peace the remains of my life.

"I"

" It has never experienced any extraor-
" dinary revolutions: but do not the paſ-
" ſions of youth always ſufficiently torment
" and agitate the ſoul, to make repoſe
" pleaſing to age? I have not gone far
" in the purſuit of happineſs, and conſe-
" quently have met with few misfortunes;
" but I have ſeen my fellow creatures over-
" whelmed with them. I continued
" amongſt them, to alleviate their miſeries,
" as long as I was able. I quitted them,
" when I found myſelf no longer uſeful
" to them, in order to enjoy, in my turn,
" the tranquillity which I had endeavored
" to procure to others. My ſolitude af-
" fords me ſtill ſometimes the opportunity
" of obliging my brethren. I give my-
" ſelf up entirely to this duty. I neither
" taſte nor deſire any other pleaſure. 'Tis
" the only one which is conformable to
" my age and ſituation; and the only

" one

" one which can be enjoyed without anxie-
" ty and regret."

I partook, during this diſcourſe, of a repaſt, frugal, but agreable. The converſation of this good old man was too affecting, to divert from my breaſt the ſad ideas with which it was filled. I gave him an account of the viſit I had been making, but without telling him more. I entreated him to employ the wiſdom of his counſels, to calm the mind of Henrietta.

" You have lived," ſaid I to him, " in a
" manner to be perfectly acquainted with
" the human heart. Who can better than
" you find the remedies proper to conſole
" her?"

" Sir," replied this wiſe prieſt, " there
" are many comforters in the world;
" many

" many undertake this employment, be-
" cauſe they think it eaſy to diſcharge. Is
" there in effect any thing ſo eaſy as to
" offer to the unhappy, objects which
" we fancy ought to conſole them for the
" loſſes they have ſuſtained? One recom-
" mends pleaſures to a ſoul no longer
" ſuſceptible of them; another inſiſts on a
" forgetfulneſs of thoſe evils of which
" every moment renews the remembrance.
" The greater number expatiate on the
" joys of Heaven, and becauſe they paint
" them in the glowing colors they merit,
" think to make the wretched forget thoſe
" they have loſt on earth. No one per-
" ceives that the heart they attack is filled
" with one only object; that it is neceſ-
" ſary to remove this object before you at-
" tempt to replace it; and this is a taſk
" which time alone has the power of per-
" forming. The unhappy, wearied out

" rather

"rather than persuaded by your argu-
"ments, affect to be consoled, in order to
"be relieved from your persecutions. You
"applaud yourself on your success; and
"if at length their sorrow decreases, your
"triumph is compleat. Wretched illu-
"sion, to which the heart gives the lie!
"Sorrow never listens but to itself.

"I do not know, Sir, how to console;
"I hear the unfortunate, I assist them
"when I can, I pity them when I ought;
"and Heaven does the rest."

My host spoke thus, when his house-keeper came to complain to him of his valet. "He staid in the garden," said she, "all the time the rain lasted, without "even perceiving it, and without hearing "me when I called him. He is now "going to bed; he is always reading or

"weeping,

" weeping, the latter is his common em-
" ployment."

" Let him alone," ſaid the good eccle-
ſiaſtic: " he is abſorbed in ſorrow, and de-
" ſerves our compaſſion. " I am only
" ſorry he has been wet; it may affect his
" health: you ſhould have told me this,
" inſtead of chiding him harſhly, as I am
" afraid you have done."

" Why does he ſtay here then? In ſhort,
" he is your valet. 'Tis his buſineſs to
" ſerve you, and he is more expence than
" uſe to us."

" If he is unhappy, 'tis my buſineſs to
" ſerve him. I invited him hither, in hopes
" to leſſen his misfortune; and to treat
" him thus, would be to increaſe it inhu-
" manly. It is not true that he is uſeleſs

" to

" to me; he teaches me every day to con-
" quer my paſſions; he, who reſiſts them
" at the age when others think only of in-
" dulging them. Be this as it may, you
" will oblige me by leaving him the quiet
" he ſeeks, and which it is my deſire to
" procure him in the moſt unlimited man-
" ner."

A valet who was mentioned in ſuch terms, ſtrongly excited my curioſity. I could not prevent the good man's obſerving it.

" I am unable to ſatisfy you," ſaid he:
" I know little more of him than yourſelf.
" I received him here without apprehen-
" ſion, becauſe I poſſeſs nothing which
" can tempt the deſires of avarice. I found
" this young man, about two months ago,
" in the church belonging to the con-

" vent, ready to expire under the weight
" of a ſorrow which he endeavored to con-
" ceal. I brought him home with me;
" I gave him leave to ſtay here as long
" as he choſe. The next day he took on
" himſelf the care of my garden; he
" works little, but he does more than I
" aſked of him. The opportunity of do-
" ing him ſervice is not the leaſt obliga-
" tion I owe to him. The only pleaſure
" I ſee him take, is that of accompany-
" ing me in all the offices of the convent.
" But, if his grief appears ſuſpended whilſt
" he is there, it returns with redoubled
" bitterneſs when he leaves it.

" He has ſince informed me he is of an
" illuſtrious family, and that he has met
" with uncommon misfortunes. This is
" all I know. I do not love to queſtion
" the afflicted: 'tis laying an obligation

" on

" on one's ſelf to converſe with them con-
" tinually on the ſubject of their ſorrows;
" an employment diſagreable to one party,
" afflicting to the other; and uſeleſs to
" both."

I could not help remarking the ſage indifference of my hoſt. He obliged me to take ſome repoſe. This morning, after having thanked him for his obliging reception, and received new offers of ſervice, I left him; reflecting on the road on the many unhappy perſons, in whoſe afflictions my heart had during ſo ſhort a period taken an intereſt.

It ſeems that the evils we ourſelves ſuffer, make us give more attention to thoſe of others, and of conſequence diſcover to us a greater number of unfortunate perſons.

I admire the character of your friend, Monſ. De Premont. I congratulate you more and more on his acquaintance. He becomes every day more dear to me, by his firmneſs, his courage, and above all by the ſervice he has rendered you.

Adieu!

DE PRELE.

LET-

LETTER LVI.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

F——.

THIS month the campaign finiſhes. My dear Premont is in deſpair at it. This gallant man has an avidity of glory which is inconceivable. He ſignalizes himſelf every day by new actions of the utmoſt intrepidity. The praiſes he receives ſpread a radiant joy on his countenance, and by degrees almoſt diſſipate his ſadneſs. We have been obliged to ſeparate. My regiment goes into winter quarters at P—; and I am fixed at F—, to drink the waters.

I forget whether I have already told you that Monſ. De Premont is at preſent Captain Commandant of my company. He is therefore under a neceſſity of being with the regiment. He has only requeſted leave of abſence of me for a few days, which he ſhould be very glad, he tells me, to give to his affairs. This ſeparation will be very painful to me. If it were poſſible I could be ſorry for any thing which was an advantage to him, it would be on this occaſion, where this very advantage takes him from me. His preſence will be more neceſſary to me than ever. He could conſole me. He would aſſiſt me at leaſt to paſs the time, in a place where I have no acquaintance, and where I conſequently foreſee the days will be very tedious.

Julia

Julia never ſo totally abſorbed my whole ſoul as at preſent. During the night, her image never one inſtant leaves me. In the day, the ſame ideas, leſs lively but more cruel, unceaſingly torment me. I recall all the hiſtory of this unfortunate family: the cruel end of Corſange; the ſtill more dreadful one of Madame D'Ornance; the voluntary exile of the father and daughter. I join to theſe, in ſpite of myſelf, the death of my mother, the ſufferings of Henrietta.

Theſe agonizing reflections freeze my ſoul, and make me recoil with horror. I endeavor in vain to baniſh theſe fatal images. Where ſhall I go to avoid them? My eſtate, Paris, would only revive them more ſtrongly. Oh! my dear Sir! the

unhappy man, delivered to himſelf, is a hundred times the more to be pitied!

The only moments in which I find any ſweetneſs are thoſe wherein I reflect, that I have yet two friends infinitely dear to me, you and Monſ. De Premont. He cannot be ſaid to have loſt all, who, in the midſt of misfortune itſelf, poſſeſſes ſtill a ſoul capable of loving, and friends worthy of being beloved.

I have heard here that Madame D'Eſſ— has really purchaſed an eſtate near ours. I am charmed with the new courſe of ſtudy on which ſhe has entered.

I thank her for her advice; but, if ſhe expects no other viſit than mine at her country-ſeat, ſhe may perhaps find as much

tediouſneſs

tedioufneſs and diſguſt there, as I am afraid I ſhall find at F—.

Adieu!

My dear Sir!

Your affectionate,

ST. FORLAIX.

LETTER LVII.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

MONS. De Premont is right; we ought never to deſpair of happineſs; it riſes in the very midſt of misfortune. My dear uncle, we have not loſt all.

I was walking, in a very melancholy manner, on the ramparts of F——, where, as I have already told you, I am drinking the waters, when a man who paſſed me regarded me attentively: I examined him in my turn.

" 'Tis Monſ. De St. Forlaix!" ſaid he; " 'tis my dear maſter!"—It was Germain.

I expreſſed to this honeſt creature all the joy I felt at ſeeing him. His, tranſported him out of himſelf. I haſtened to aſk him a variety of queſtions. " What do " you do here?—whither are you going? " what is become of Julia? of her fa- " ther?".

" My dear Sir, do not aſk me; I can- " not ſatisfy you, without betraying my " truſt."

" Germain, my life depends upon your " anſwer; hide nothing from me: you " are acquainted with the retreat of Monſ. " D'Ornance and his daughter; into what " corner of the earth have they withdrawn

" themſelves from my friendſhip? Do not
" be as cruel as they are. Conduct me
" to them. Ah! what have they to fear
" from their tendereſt friend? Germain,
" if you ever had the leaſt attachment to
" me, do not refuſe me this requeſt; do
" not add to the wretchedneſs of my
" days."

" I foreſaw this cruel eagerneſs," cried Germain, whilſt he bathed my hand with tears; " I foreſaw it, yet did not avoid it.
" I could not ſee my maſter, whom I ſo
" tenderly love, and reſiſt the pleaſure of
" embracing his knees. What, Sir, would
" you have of me? Take my life, it has
" long been yours; but do not demand
" the ſecrets of thoſe to whom I now
" belong. The light is leſs dear to them
" than this cruel ſecret. Would you
" oblige me to force them to diſcloſe it?"

" But,

"But, my dear Germain, what is this "obligation? I know all the cauſes of "their misfortune. Why will they de- "prive themſelves of the only friend who "would alleviate their affliction? Tell me "at leaſt in what ſituation is Julia? will "the pleaſure of ſeeing her be always "denied me? becauſe ſhe cannot be my "wife, muſt ſhe be to me nothing? is "love the only ſentiment to which virtue "like hers can give birth?—ſhe inſpires "all—ſhe is ſo formed for friendſhip!— "Germain, let me ſee her,—let me "ſpeak to her—let me at leaſt write—"

"Allow me to go, Sir; let us part, I "intreat: I have with you occaſion for "all my fidelity; I even find it too "weak—on my knees, Sir, I entreat to "go."

"Go,

"Go cruel man, as much an enemy "to my happineſs, as thoſe to whom you "are now attached. The tenderneſs of "which you all make ſuch parade, is a "vain affectation."

"Ah! Sir, Sir, I will go—I cannot ſtay, "and fulfil my duty. Yet I cannot leave "you loaded with your indignation. Re-"member, Sir, that I am only the depo-"ſitory of my maſter's ſecrets; that I "ought not to excite your anger by ac-"quitting myſelf of my obligation to him. "You would not wiſh me to become "unworthy of your favor, by betraying "the laws of honor. Diſmiſs me, Sir; "but do not hate me."

"You have not deſerved it, my "good Germain," ſaid I, preſſing his hand.

hand. "'Tis not of you I ought to complain, but of the fatal order which obliges you to ſilence. Go, do as you are commanded; I will detain you no longer."

At theſe words Germain, elated with joy, left me, and entered into a neighbouring inn, where he ordered his horſe to be ſaddled. I took advantage of this moment, to give directions to two ſpies. They were ready as ſoon as he was, and followed him.

They came back two hours after, and informed me, that Germain, almoſt two leagues from the town, had entered a large houſe, where he ſtaid only an hour: one of my ſpies continued to follow him, whilſt the other endeavored to diſcover to whom this houſe belonged. No one could tell him

him the name of its maſter, who had never reſided there; he had only been there once, to take poſſeſſion, on making the purchaſe: ſince which time they had ſeen only this domeſtic, who came there almoſt every month. He generally paſſed an hour there, without any perſon's knowing how he was employed. The care of the houſe was intruſted to a poor family in the village, who could however give no further information.

The other ſpy followed Germain to a convent, which he ſaw him leave in half an hour, retake the road to the houſe, and from thence return to F——. He enquired what had brought him thither: all the anſwer he could procure was, that he was a domeſtic, who came to pay the penſion of ſiſter *Agnes*.

On

On this diſcovery, I mounted on horſe-back, I arrived at the convent, I aſked for ſiſter *Agnes*: they abſolutely refuſed to let me ſee her.

"I muſt ſpeak to her:" ſaid I, "I have "orders to deliver to her from her fa-"ther."

I heſitated whether to avail myſelf of this pretence: the moſt trifling queſtion would have undone me. Germain had juſt left the convent, he might have given inſtructions to refuſe me entrance: but I hazarded this plea as the only one which could give me a chance to ſee her. The ſiſter to whom I ſpoke regarded me attentively; every moment's delay plunged a thouſand daggers in my heart. At length

ſhe

ſhe bid me wait. I remained an entire hour in the moſt tormenting perplexity.

I heard a noiſe; my heart beat with violence: ſome one approached. The door opened—you will, my dear Sir, eaſily ſuppoſe it was Julia; it was ſhe—it was the adored miſtreſs of my heart.

"I ſuppoſed it was you," ſaid ſhe to me tranquilly: "what would you with me?"

I was no longer myſelf. I kiſſed eagerly the grate which ſeparated us. I did not dare to raiſe my eyes to Julia. This was a happineſs which I did not think was permitted me. I had hoped to ſee her, yet could not believe it poſſible. I repeated with tranſport, "'Tis you, 'tis "you! I am allowed once again to behold "my Julia."

"Moderate

"Moderate yourſelf," ſaid ſhe to me, taking a ſeat. "Let us converſe reaſon-"ably; if you come here to ſee me, don't "let us loſe a moment ſo precious. 'Tis "the laſt time we ſhall enjoy this hap-"pineſs."

"The laſt time, Julia? What have you "ſaid?" cried I, collecting all the ſtrength which remained to me. This effort was too great; I ſunk under it. I found myſelf ill. Julia took one of my hands, which reſted againſt the grate; ſhe preſſed it in hers, ſhe held it to her heart. Her careſſes recalled me to life.

"I entreated you to liſten to me without "paſſion," ſaid Mademoiſelle D'Ornance with an air of tenderneſs; "cannot you "calm the violence of your tranſports? „Seat yourſelf."—I obeyed.

"Providence

" Providence has ſeparated us," continued ſhe; " it is ſtronger than our " wiſhes: we ought to ſubmit to its de- " crees: we ſhould indeed in vain reſiſt " them. I love you as much as it is " poſſible for a human heart to love; yet " I bid you adieu for ever: you ſee, by " the habit I wear, the ſtate of life I " mean to embrace. Do not endeavor to " diſſuade me from it; you will not ſuc- " ceed. 'Tis a violent ſtep; but ſuch is " my misfortune, I can take no other."

" Cruel Julia! with what unconcern " you rend my heart! You ſay you love " me, and yet you would take from me " the pleaſure of ſeeing you, the only " one that remains to me in the world. " If your misfortunes oblige you to ſeek " this aſylum, do they alſo oblige you

" to

" to ſeparate yourſelf from your only
" friend?

" You ſee your father, you ſee even the
" domeſtic who brings his orders; and
" you refuſe to ſee him who ought to be
" your huſband! What is then the hor-
" rible misfortune which can annihilate
" this title, which can break the tenderties
" that unite us?"

" There is perhaps only one which
" could have torn me from my dear St.
" Forlaix, and that one I have experienced.
" Aſk me no more; it is of ſo dreadful
" a nature, that I am compelled to hide
" it even from you. But, ſince it is ir-
" reparable, do not ſeek to ſtruggle againſt
" it. By continuing to ſee each other,
" we ſhall only aggravate our ſorrows.
" The time approaches, when this pleaſure

" will

" will be no longer permitted me: why " ſhould we render this privation more " bitter?"

" But why do you, Julia, take on you " a profeſſion to which nothing obliges " you? Your father is too juſt to force " you to it. Whatever your misfortunes " are, can they change a ſoul like yours? " Julia, if this retreat is for life, is it " not in effect a perpetual ſlavery? will " you tear yourſelf from me a ſecond " time? Do not think I will calmly ſee " you deſcend living into the tomb, when " it is in my power to ſave you from it. " What are chimerical family reaſons to " me?"

" Ah! St. Forlaix! if you knew them!"

" They would not change me."

" Your

" Your ardor, your tenderneſs, deceives " you. Great God! muſt a brother—" ſhe was ſilent at theſe words. She dreaded telling me too much: I did not dare to ſpeak myſelf; I could not afflict her by appearing too well inſtructed in the cauſe of her diſtreſs. I waited her anſwer—ſhe expected I ſhould explain myſelf—we regarded each other tenderly; I preſſed her hand in mine. Our ſighs were intermingled, and our tears flowed in abundance.

" My brother," cried Julia in a faltering voice—" my brother is dead—he " ſeparates us for ever."

" No, he only changes the nature of our " union."

" He

"He has robbed me of all I held moſt "dear."

"He has taken from you your huſband; "he cannot deprive you of your friend."

"My friend! St. Forlaix, honor has "its prejudices—"

"Virtue, Julia, is never diſhonored."

By the trembling of her whole frame, by the involuntary preſſure of her cheek to mine, by a look which cannot be deſcribed, I found ſhe underſtood me.

Fear and uncertainty took poſſeſſion of my heart—I turned pale—a mortal ſhivering ſeized me. Julia quitted my hand which ſhe held, and fell, almoſt without ſenſe, into her chair.—"He then knows all!"

" Julia, I adore you."

" Does he then force me to bluſh before " him?"

" Yes, cruel! you ought to bluſh for " the unworthy idea you have entertained " of me. Your lover, your huſband, your " friend, you have believed capable of " feeling the capricious prejudices of weak " minds. Julia, honor is ſeated in the " ſoul: yours is pure. Can I then ceaſe " to eſteem you? You have all the qua- " lities which command love, and it is " becauſe of thoſe qualities I love you."

" You determine me," reſumed ſhe, recalling at the ſame time her firſt tranquillity. " You make me ſee the danger of " which you are ignorant, and which it is

" my duty to prevent. I love you more " tenderly than ever; I am convinced of " your affection; I believe I poſſeſs your " eſteem, and I even agree that I have " merited it. But the life which, leſs " from neceſſity than choice, I have re- " ſolved to embrace, the life from which " my father and you have equally en- " deavored to diſſuade me, is become in- " diſpenſable. My choice is made: no- " thing can influence me to change it. " Adieu! St. Forlaix, adieu for ever!"

She here quitted me precipitately. My prayers, my tears, my cries, were inſufficient to ſtop her. I ſtill remained in that fatal parlour. A lay ſiſter came to give me notice to retire. I with difficulty yielded to her remonſtrances. I went out at length, and ſince that fatal moment I have never beheld her. I have gained the

the nun who attends at the grate to my intereſts. She informs me of all Julia's proceedings. She does not deſpair of engaging her to receive my letters. She has not, however, yet ſucceeded. But at leaſt I know the place of her retreat. This knowledge leſſens the weight of my misfortune.

Muſt a word ſpoke by chance, a propoſal which ſhe ought not to have taken literally, which I perhaps made her only to engage her to ſuffer my viſits, take from me for ever all hope? Write to me, my dear uncle; I have great occaſion for your counſels.

You are the only perſon who can adviſe me what I ought to do.

Adieu!

ST. FORLAIX.

LETTER LVIII.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX,
at F——.

Paris.

WHAT counſels do you require of me? are you really in doubt, or do you only mean to ſound me?

However this may be, I have but one manner of thinking, and my anſwer will be always the ſame. I cannot adviſe you; but if you only wiſh to know my ſentiments, I give then to you with pleaſure.

You

You have diſcovered Julia's retreat; ſhe alone can make you happy: if you ſtill love her, and it is poſſible, you muſt marry her.

I feel that this idea may appear ridiculous even to eyes the leaſt blinded by prejudice: perhaps you will yourſelf be ſtartled at it. It is common enough to exclaim againſt abuſes, which we have not the reſolution to be the firſt to repreſs.

Eſpouſe a girl whoſe family is diſhonored! 'Tis in converſation only that the arguments in favor of ſuch a marriage are well received.

No one thinks his own an authority ſufficient to mark out firſt the road of reaſon and good ſenſe. The prejudice, deteſtable

as it is, remains as reſpectable as if it had never been controverted.

What would be the conſequence if you ſhould ſhake off this galling yoke, and marry Mademoiſelle D'Ornance! You muſt reſolve to live ſome time, perhaps for ever, at your eſtate. This marriage will be the news of the day. Men of wiſdom and ſenſibility will approve it; will ſay, "he has "preferred his happineſs to every thing." Some will blame you through folly; others for the pleaſure of talking.

When you appear at court, few people will addreſs you. Your wife will not be viſited. But the common courſe of affairs, and time, which deſtroys every thing, will connect you inſenſibly with a more numerous ſociety. The world will reflect, that the thing is done, and that neither of you

are

are leſs amiable than before. Every one will of himſelf excuſe you. Some public ceremony will bring you and thoſe of your own rank together. The women will ſee Julia at firſt in ſpite of themſelves, and afterwards from choice. Nobody will find any thing to blame in this, and it will continue. If during this interval ſome man of equal rank ſhould imitate you, prejudice, which you will have already ſtrongly ſhook, will be near its fall: there requires only a third to deſtroy it entirely.

Conſider whether you have ſtrength of mind, to ſupport all theſe, and perhaps greater mortifications. Whoever firſt ventures to do any thing extraordinary ought to ſuppoſe the balance equally poiſed whether he receives praiſe or blame. 'Tis chance alone which makes either ſcale preponderate.

Were I you, I would marry Julia. I would ſhew her ſome time in the world, that it might know how worthy ſhe was of what I had done for her. When they knew her enough to regret her, I would take her from them; we would retire to our eſtates: and I ſhould be thus ſufficiently revenged for their contempt.

Behold, St. Forlaix, my manner of thinking. But do not ſuppoſe I am giving you advice. On occaſions ſo delicate, every one ought to conſult himſelf alone; that, if he ſhould repent, he may have himſelf alone to blame.

Let me know what you have determined: if it is to marry Julia, I will write to Monſ. De l'Etang. His mind, warped by prejudice, will not eaſily yield to reaſon.

I ſhall

I ſhall think myſelf very dextrous, if I can influence him in your favor.

I would not, however, adviſe you to deſpiſe his authority. Independently of the great poſſeſſions of which he can deprive you, I know of no motive which can diſpenſe with the obedience of children to their parents. The Baron has the ſame rights over you as your late father, and you owe him an equal ſubmiſſion.

But we ſeem to diſpoſe of Julia extremely at our eaſe, though ſhe has ſo conſtantly refuſed you, though the mere propoſal has hindered her from ſeeing you again! You ought firſt to be certain of her conſent. Spare no pains with her; and on my ſide, I will do all poſſible with the Baron.

Tell me whether your friend Monſ. De Premont is acquainted with this event. You may conſult this amiable man, this wiſe friend, without appearing to give him that entire confidence which he has had the diſcretion to refuſe.

Your affectionate,

DE PRELI

LET

LETTER LIX.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

F——.

WHY, my dear Sir, will you loſe a moment? can you doubt of my ſentiments? Whilſt you are enquiring them, Julia will render them of no importance. In eight days it will be in vain that I have found her. I am on the point of loſing her, and at this time without a ray of hope. In eight days ſhe takes the vows. Ah! with what title ſhall I oppoſe them? Can I offer her a hand of which I have not a right to diſpoſe? If ſhe accepts

it, and Monſ. De L'Etang afterwards refuſes his conſent, to what humiliation will this adorable girl have been expoſed? Does ſhe deſerve to be the ſport of a whole family?

You, my dear uncle, cannot have a doubt of Julia's being the only object of my tenderneſs, or that I ſhould prefer to every thing the happineſs of paſſing my days with her.

But, alas! I have no longer any hope. If Monſ. De l'Etang ſhould conſent, Julia will not even hear our union mentioned. The nun, whom, as I have already ſaid, I had gained, has ſeveral times attempted to make her read a letter I had wrote to her: ſhe has obſtinately refuſed. Fatigued (to uſe her own expreſſion) with my perſecution, ſhe has, by this nun, ſent me the following billet:

" To Monſ. De St. Forlaix.

" IMPRUDENT man! why will you, " inſtead of endeavoring to reſtore peace " to your own ſoul, uſe every effort to tear " it from mine? why ſhould the paſſions " which agitate you, diſturb the calm which " I enjoy? I can never be yours: what " then would you of me? is not your " image already too deeply engraved on " my heart, without your thus attempting " to ſtrengthen the impreſſion, only to in- " creaſe my miſery? In eight days I ſhall " put inſurmountable bars between us: do " not endeavor to break them, if you " have the leaſt ſpark of tenderneſs for " me remaining. Reſume *your* tranquil- " lity, and leave me to ſeek *mine* in this " retreat. The world has no longer the " power to give it me.

" Julia D'Ornance."

Nothing

Nothing was ever equal to the fury with which this letter inſpired me. To have diſcovered with difficulty a bleſſing ſo ardently deſired, and to be on the point of loſing it for ever! This idea diſturbed my reaſon. I inſiſted on ſpeaking inſtantly to the abbeſs. She came.

"Madam," cried I, "you with-hold "from me a treaſure to which you have "no right. She, whom you call Siſter "Agnes, is by the moſt ſolemn engage- "ments my wife. Heaven was witneſs "when ſhe ſwore to be mine. Every vow "which contradicts this her firſt would "be criminal, would be ſacrilegious. Give "her back to me, Madam; the laws of "Heaven, and of honor, forbid your keep- "ing her."

"Sir,"

" Sir," ſaid the abbeſs, with a cruel and affected gentleneſs, " this young lady, of " whoſe name and rank we are ignorant, " does us too much honor, by living " amongſt us, for us not to receive her " with joy, and even to preſs her with all " our power to embrace our ſoft and tran- " quil ſtate of life, which can alone diſ- " ſipate the ſorrows with which ſhe ſeems " to be overwhelmed. She would before " this have been the worthy ſpouſe of " Heaven, if the dower which ſhe expects " had arrived. We defer only to that mo- " ment, the rendering her a partaker of " our celeſtial joys; and that moment is " not very diſtant.

" As to the reaſons you have alledged, " Sir, they are reaſons purely ſublunary, " into which we ought not to examine. " This lady is here by her own choice;

" and we know of no motive which ought
" to prevent our accepting the honor
" which ſhe is deſirous to do us."

I was going at this diſcourſe to break out into menaces and reproaches; but the abbeſs was already gone; and the nun who attended the grate came, though unwillingly, to tell me I muſt retire, and that ſhe was ſtrictly ordered never again to admit me into the convent.

I obeyed, deſpair in my heart. I preſented myſelf ſeveral times at this fatal door. I even endeavored, but in vain, to ſcale the walls. If I had obtained only one converſation with her, I might perhaps have gained ſomething on her reſolution: at leaſt I ſhould have had the delight of ſeeing her once more.

I have

I have many things to ſay to her: I ſhould have known of her in what retreat her reſpectable father lingers out his wretched days. Who can tell whether he knows her deſigns, whether he would not oppoſe them? She has herſelf told me, this ſtate of life is diſpleaſing to him — I would embrace his knees, I would endeavor to ſoften him. He might perhaps command his daughter to make us all happy. But the whole world agrees to hide him from me: he flies all thoſe who moſt tenderly love him: he renders me unhappy by a conduct which makes him a thouſand times more to be pitied.

What then, Sir, ſhall I do? To have only eight days, and not to know what ſtep to take! At all events, gain my grandfather's conſent.

Heaven,

Heaven, who has ſo often ſnatched me from the precipice, may in its goodneſs once more aſſiſt me.

Adieu!

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER LX.

To the Baron DE L'ETANG,
at St. Forlaix.

Paris.

YOU have been the friend of Monſ. and Madame D'Ornance; you have known their ſon and daughter, and have as much eſteemed the amiable qualities of the one, as you have deteſted the vile inclinations of the other. You have therefore experienced the poſſibility of ſo diſtinguiſhing your ſentiments in reſpect to this family, as to entertain favorable ones for thoſe who appear to you worthy of them, without feeling the leſs abhorrence for him who merited your hatred.

Would

Would you allow a man the character of rational who thought differently? would it paſs amongſt men of ſenſe to ſay, "I "diſlike this man, though he has all the "virtues, all the good qualities, of which "human nature is capable, becauſe he has "a wicked relation?" I cannot ſuppoſe any perſon weak enough to make ſuch a ridiculous aſſertion. Yet this is the real tendency of this falſe and dangerous prejudice, which cuts off from ſociety, marks with undeſerved infamy, and deprives of every right of citizens, and almoſt of men, the unhappy relations of him who has ſuffered for his crimes.

To ſhew how ill founded, cruel, and abſurd, this prejudice is, let us a little examine its inconſiſtency. If this tacit law is unjuſt, it ought to be deſtroyed; if juſt,

to

to be rigorouſly obſerved. In the latter caſe, what evils, what depopulations, would it not occaſion in the ſtate! All the families thus barbarouſly ſtigmatized would be obliged to abandon their country, and carry elſewhere their arms and their induſtry, which are the principal riches of the nation. It muſt be conſidered, that in loſing one family, you muſt not calculate only the five or ſix perſons of whom it is compoſed; but all whom it might have produced to the kingdom, and who become the property of ſtrangers. And what will be the conſequence? They will change their names, and all will be forgot. You will not even preſerve the example to others; you will have made them wretched at the national expence. Their voluntary exile will be all poſitive loſs to their country.

Let

repair them? and how can ſhe better repair them, than by uniting herſelf to a man worthy of her virtues? by tranſmitting theſe virtues to children, who may acquit themſelves to their country of thoſe duties which her brother has ſo fatally neglected? by acquiring a new increaſe of glory, which may wipe off the ſtains of her family, if it is true that it has incurred any?

Let a man known and eſteemed like St. Forlaix give the firſt blow to a prejudice more deteſted even than followed. The action may ſurprize; but his reputation will ſecure him from blame. We have had examples of this, too elevated to be the objects of our imitation. St. Forlaix is exactly in the ſituation to overturn this column, of which the baſe is already ſapped by philoſophy and reaſon.

Subdued

Subdued by thoſe two powerful enemies in a neighbouring nation, this prejudice ſtill reigns in France. We hate, we abhor, its authority; yet cannot reſolve to ſhake off the yoke it impoſes. Reaſon, which in other climes requires labor to aſſiſt its growth, ſhoots feebly in our minds, perhaps more fertile for want of cultivation.

Shall the Engliſh then have ſpirit to riſe up againſt, to aboliſh, a cuſtom ſo firmly eſtabliſhed? and ſhall we have the weakneſs not to dare to imitate them? Yet their ſucceſs is a ſufficient anſwer to all the objections which might have been founded on the uncertainty of this event. Is wickedneſs held by them in leſs horror, becauſe the ſhame which it deſerves is confined to the guilty only? is virtue there

leſs eſteemed? is honor there leſs conſidered? is it not, on the contrary, much more, ſince the *true* is there only regarded; that real *honor*, which depends on dignity of mind, not on the concurrence of events?

If we are conſtrained to admire this wiſe cuſtom, why do we diſdain to adopt it? Let us leave to St. Forlaix the glory of making this firſt attempt. The riſk is his alone; the tranſitory ſhame it may occaſion can no more extend to you, than your glory acquired in war can add to the merit of Madame D'Ornance. Allow St. Forlaix to hazard an uncertain diſgrace, the idle talk of a moment, to aſcertain the happineſs of his whole life. What injury after all can the world do him? He has ſerved with too much honor to fear being deprived of his employments. If he is condemned by the inconſiderate, of what

conſequence

conſequence to him is their vain eſteem, whilſt he is poſſeſſed of happineſs they are even incapable of taſting? We only feel the loſs of the public favor in thoſe inſtances where we have endeavored to gain it. 'Tis his part to conduct himſelf in things of importance in ſuch a manner that it cannot be refuſed him.

The worſt he has to fear from ſociety is, that they will for ſome time avoid him, which appears to me the moſt deſirable circumſtance he can meet with. He will better taſte his happineſs, when he enjoys it without interruption.

I expect your anſwer, Sir; I hope I have ſaid enough to render it favorable.

I have the honor to be, &c.

DE PRELE.

LETTER LXI.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

F——.

TAKE courage, my dear uncle! Julia will not be to-morrow torn from me. I have retarded for ſome time this dreadful moment. Perhaps it may never arrive: at leaſt, I am allowed to hope.

You will judge in how horrible a ſituation I muſt have paſſed the laſt eight days. I was like a man who is unable to change his place, to avoid the thunder which he ſees ready to burſt on his head.

This

This morning, having roſe earlier than was my cuſtom, I went to the place where I generally paſſed the day. I walked without knowing whither I went. I was ignorant even of the aim of my wiſhes, which I ſaw no probable means of ſatisfying, when I perceived at a diſtance a man whom before I clearly diſtinguiſhed I gueſſed to be Germain. I haſtened to meet him. My ſtrength failed me. I was obliged to ſupport myſelf againſt a tree. My heart beat; I could ſcarce breathe. I was not enough myſelf to recollect what I ought to ſay to him. I wiſhed to ſpeak to him; and this was all of which I had a diſtinct idea. He at length reached me. I threw myſelf on his neck. "Ah! Germain! ſave "me," cried I, and continued to embrace him, without being able to add a ſingle word.

" Great God!" ſaid he, " what is the " meaning of this! what has happened to " you? Alas! in what a ſtate do I find you! " in what a place! what do you aſk of me?"

" That you will ſave me."

" And from what, Sir?"

" From death, a death as near as it is " certain.—Julia!—ah! you knew, and " you told me nothing—if I had ſeen her " ſooner, perhaps I might have prevented " the misfortune which is ready to over- " whelm me."

" You have then ſeen her?"

" Yes, cruel man, I have ſeen her, in " ſpite of you: you wiſhed to rob me of " this pleaſure; the only one which now " remains to me. Alas! I have enjoy- " ed it, notwithſtanding your barbarous " ſilence;

" ſilence; and I am only the more un-
" happy."

" And was I then wrong, Sir, to refuſe
" you? You have only, as you confeſs, ag-
" gravated your ſorrows, by renewing an
" impreſſion almoſt effaced."

" *Almoſt effaced?*—Are you determined
" to drive me to deſpair?—Germain, there
" never was a moment ſince I firſt loved
" her, when the ardor of my paſſion felt
" the leaſt abatement.—But it is time to
" finiſh this uſeleſs converſation—I have
" but one word to ſay. I am threatened
" with the moſt dreadful and irretrievable
" misfortune: it muſt be prevented, and it
" is in your power."

Germain at theſe words turned pale: he ſaw my purpoſe. " What can I do, Sir?" ſaid he with a trembling voice. " You

" have ſeen Mademoiſelle D'Ornance; you
" cannot be ignorant of her reſolution,
" which is undoubtedly the misfortune you
" apprehend. But you ought alſo to
" know, that this deſign is too firmly
" fixed in her ſoul to be removed. If
" your prayers, your tears, the love which
" ſhe has for you, has had no effect,
" what can ſo inſignificant a creature as I
" am do for you?"

" You can ſerve me."

" No, Sir, it is impoſſible. Mademoi-
" ſelle Julia is as inflexible as her father.
" Nothing can make her change her pur-
" poſe. Her laſt letter is too preſſing, to
" allow me to hope it. She demands her
" dower, which I am carrying to her, with
" a letter from Monſ. D'Ornance."

" You

" You carry her dower?—All is ſaved!—
" Liſten to me, Germain; be ſilent, and
" liſten to me. Follow me: give me that
" dower, or ſee me expire before your
" eyes."

" Ah! Sir!"

" No evaſions; I have taken my reſolu-
" tion."

" And *you* deſire me to betray the
" daughter of my maſter? to become a
" robber?"

" You will have done nothing criminal:
" you will only have made happy thoſe
" to whom you pretend to be attached.
" Julia is mine: I have received her vows
" in the ſight of Heaven.—My life is in

" your hands: will you deprive me of it,
" or ſerve me?"

" Is it poſſible I can?"

Fury now enflamed me: my ſword was drawn. I pointed it at my breaſt. " Speak:
" there is only one word which can ſave
" me. Have you determined?"

" Yes, Sir, to do whatever you com-
" mand.—I will be perfidious, to ſerve
" you.—I will ſacrifice to you my duty."
I claſped him in my arms, and he wept in ſilence.

" I will ſerve you, Sir," ſaid he, after a moment's pauſe. " I will be faithful
" to my maſter, and yet ſerve you. Give
" me only four days; I will employ
" them—"

" To

"To betray me?"

"Cruel as you are, if I could betray "any one on earth, would it be you?"

I received his aſſurances, and I depend on them. The very fidelity which oppoſed me, is my ſecurity for that which I expect of him. We returned to the village, where he quitted me.—In four days, his promiſe will be fulfilled, and my fate determined.

But what have I to hope? Germain has promiſed to ſerve me, not to render me happy. What means can he employ? why does he make a myſtery of them to me? In this long and painful interval of doubt, my mind is on the rack. I do not

dare to indulge a hope, which I could not afterwards relinquish but by too painful an effort.

Adieu!

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER LXII.

To Monſ. De Prele,
at Paris.

St. Forlaix.

IS it then Monſ. De Prele who makes me a propoſal ſo ſtrange and ſo abſurd, that if his nephew had made it, it would have been neceſſary to confine him for the reſt of his life? a family, ancient and illuſtrious as ours, ally itſelf with one, the blood of which yet ſmokes on the ſcaffold where it flowed? can a man who has the uſe of his underſtanding conceive ſuch an idea without horror?—No, Sir, while I

can

can pronounce the name of honor, you will never obtain my conſent to ſo ignominious an union.

You have confined yourſelf to what *you* call a prejudice, but *I* a very wiſe and rational law. You raiſe a phantom, that you may have the pleaſure of conquering it. You have made ſuch objections as you knew you could eaſily refute.

You do not allow that one ſingle advantage can be oppoſed to the pretended inconſiſtencies of this prejudice, and you think you have ſaid enough to bring me into your views — you have been in this, Sir, miſtaken. You have examined its inconſiſtencies. Permit me to examine its advantages, which appear to me both more numerous and more ſolid.

Let

Let us firſt conſider what may have been the origin of this *prejudice*. It ſeems firſt to have been voluntary on the part of the relations: aſhamed of having given to their country a ſubject ſo unworthy of it, they have judged themſelves alſo unworthy of having any commerce with their fellow-citizens: ſociety, offended by the crime, has approved the reparation. If this origin is as true as it is probable, the prejudice is juſt, and ought to be preſerved.

What can be more capable of animating a father to take on himſelf the care of his children's education, than the dread of ſeeing his family one day diſhonored by them?—If this prejudice has any inconvenience, it is, that it has not ſufficient force: that the name may be changed, and

all forgot. Society is intereſted that the ſhame ſhould never be effaced.

But becauſe a cuſtom has not all the extent it ought, is it therefore to be aboliſhed? is it not a reaſon, on the contrary, for retaining the little which remains?

This advantage is not confined to the more particular care which a father takes of his children. Do you think a young man, not hardened in crimes, but juſt on the point of delivering himſelf up to them, would not be reſtrained by this reflexion, that if he is diſcovered, he diſhonors a family dear to him, hinders the eſtabliſhment of a brother, or a ſiſter; in ſhort, reduces to ſhame and miſery thoſe from whom he has received ſo many acts of kindneſs?

This

This fear has often more influence on the heart of a young man, than that of death, which he is early accuſtomed to deſpiſe.

" I grant," you ſay, " my friendſhip to " the father and the daughter, whilſt I " hate and deſpiſe the ſon." Yes; as an individual, I think thus: but the ſentiments of an individual and of ſociety are very different. You aſſert, " that it is not " reaſonable, the innocent relations ſhould " ſuffer the puniſhment due to the criminal " alone." We are in ſome degree guilty of the crimes which we might have hindered, or repaired. Beſides, the puniſhment is in juſt proportion: if both ſides are involved in the ſhame, death is the portion only of the criminal.

" If

" If this law," you ſay, " was rigorouſly " obeyed, many families would be obliged " to forſake their country.—*What depo-* " *pulation!*" There would be much leſs than at preſent, becauſe there would be fewer crimes. It would even be better the nation loſt thoſe families; that it loſt on the ſide of induſtry and riches, to gain on that of virtue: that it contained fewer, but more worthy citizens.

To return to the family of Monſ. D'Ornance, whom I eſteem as much as you ſuppoſe. I cannot refuſe him my friendſhip, which he merits; but I can refuſe to his family my alliance, which it merits no longer.

They were culpable in not having ſufficiently puniſhed the growing vices of Corſange. It is not I who condemn them,

them; 'tis ſociety, which demands examples. I pity and love thoſe amongſt them who deſerve my tenderneſs and compaſſion; but that is all I can do for them. If Mademoiſelle D'Ornance is to repair the honor of *her* family, why muſt it be at the expence of *mine?*

This idea of reparation may be very philoſophic, but it is rather too chimerical to be received.

You ſay, "St. Forlaix poſſeſſes a ſufficient ſhare of glory, to overthrow the already tottering column of prejudice." Granting for a moment that it ought to be overturned, who will aſſure you he has this power?

And if he has not, he will have added to his firſt diſgrace, that of having failed in his raſh and ill-concerted attempt.

You

You ſpeak of "the happineſs of his "future days." Has he then a ſoul ſufficiently baſe and vile, to find it in the boſom of infamy?

He will, without ceaſing, reproach himſelf with the ſhame he has incurred; every day will embitter his regret: he will curſe his own folly, and my complaiſance. His wife and children will be to him objects of horror: the impoſſibility of recalling the paſt will be to him a continual torment: and you call this *felicity*?

Can a man of your age attend to the tranſports of a raſh impetuous youth, who ſees only the preſent moment?—He feels paſſion, he expects pleaſure; but he knows not that repentance will ſoon be his portion.

"The

"The risk is his alone." No, Sir: I have already told you, it is also mine. It is still greater to his posterity. He may have children. He owes to them birth as pure, and as illustrious, as that he received. He cannot give it them. They will grow up in disgrace, without having the power to rise above it. They cannot boast the exploits of their father. The world will object to the shame of their mother.

"He has served with honor, and can-"not lose his employments." But those who possess the same employments will no longer exercise them with him. He will be despised by his superiors: his equals will fly him, as a man whose infamy is contagious: his inferiors will even think themselves dispensed with from the respect they owe him. He will have affairs of honor every

every day; happy if he loſes his life and his diſhonor in the firſt! But he will perhaps have the ſorrow to rob his country, againſt his inclination, of ſome of its braveſt ſupports. What torment is a life, every moment of which is attended by this apprehenſion!

Nor will this action ever be forgot: the ſelf-love of mankind collects with pleaſure, and preſerves with care, all which can tend to humiliate their fellow creatures.

"He will be the more happy, becauſe "ſociety flies him!" This thought, Sir, could only ariſe from that fund of miſanthropy from whence you draw your ſyſtem: but it is too indeterminate to be true. There may be ſome pleaſure in flying ſociety, but there is always a very ſevere mortification in ſeeing ſociety fly us.

I think

I think I have ſaid enough to prevent your repeating a propoſal, which you could not have made to me but becauſe you had not well conſidered it.

Yours,

De L'Etang.

LET-

LETTER LXII.

To Monſ. DE PRELE.

at Paris.

F——.

THE fourth day, agreed on with Germain, was arrived, when I ſaw enter my apartment the man whom I ſo impatiently expected.

" Be ſatisfied, Sir," ſaid he to me, with a ſerious air: " diſpoſe entirely of me; I am " ready to obey you."

I felt, at theſe words, joy revive in my ſoul. I was going to aſk Germain what means he had uſed to acquire the power of

of being thus favorable to me: but he entreated me not to enquire. I eaſily acquieſced. I was intent only on my happineſs; and it was of little importance to me how I came to poſſeſs it.

"You are known," ſaid I, "to be commiſſioned by Monſ. D'Ornance: you "muſt go to Julia's convent, and tell the "abbeſs, your maſter's affairs are in a ſtate "which will not allow him to pay Julia's "dower, nor even to continue her penſion: "I know theſe *holy women*; they certainly "will not keep her *gratis*. When ſhe "leaves the convent, ſhe will be in my "power.

"My love, the ardent entreaties, the "tender prayers I ſhall employ, cannot "fail to determine her to marry me. I "ſhall be by your means the happieſt of

"mankind."—Germain, with the utmoſt coldneſs in his air, without replying, went out, mounted his horſe, and ſet out for the convent.

I was aſtoniſhed at the facility with which he entered into my deſigns; there was a kind of treachery in this action, not very conſonant to his character. I could as little conceive how he had paſſed the four days he had aſked of me: had he employed them in reflecting? This did not appear very probable. I was unable to fix on any idea; and I ſhould have repented of not having preſſed him more on the ſubject, if I had not already too often experienced the inflexibility of his diſcretion.

"Your commiſſion is executed, Sir," ſaid he when he returned; "I am now

"uſeleſs

" uſeleſs to you: allow me therefore to " go where my maſter's affairs call me."

My entreaties could not detain him a moment.

I prepared every thing to receive Julia, as I did not doubt but they would ſoon diſmiſs her. Even that very day, as I have been ſince informed, the abbeſs went to the apartment of ſiſter Agnes.

" My dear child," ſaid ſhe to her, " Heaven does not always permit us to " follow our pious intentions. A meer " act of the will is not a true vocation " to the holy ſtate you wiſh to embrace. " Heaven doubtleſs judges it not condu- " cive to your ſalvation, ſince it raiſes it- " ſelf invincible obſtacles.

" Beſides, we receive no perſons with-
" out the conſent of their parents; and
" your father certainly does not approve
" your purpoſe, ſince he refuſes us the
" dower which you promiſed us. He
" cannot even any longer pay your pen-
" ſion; therefore you ought to conform to
" his will. Your quarter ended yeſterday;
" order therefore your cloaths to be got
" ready, and tell me by what carriage you
" chuſe to go. I will take care to ſecure
" you a place, and we will pray God to
" grant you his benediction."

The aſtoniſhment of Julia increaſed at every word. She knew her father's circumſtances; and ſhe had, though with difficulty, obtained his conſent.

" Who, Madam," ſaid ſhe, " has
" brought you this dreadful news?"

" The

"The ſame man to whoſe care your "father entruſted you. I aſked him what "was to become of you, ſince the rules "of our community did not permit us to "keep you? But he had brought, he ſaid, "no further orders."

This was a new ſurprize to Julia. Such a proceeding aſtoniſhed her from Germain, whoſe fidelity ſhe could not ſuſpect. Her uncertainty made her ſhed tears.

"Madam," ſaid ſhe to the abbeſs, throwing herſelf on her knees, "what then will "be the fate of an unhappy creature, with-"out experience, expoſed to all the dan-"gers which threaten youth? what can I "do, abandoned, deprived of all ſuccours, "all ſupport?"

"My daughter, the ways of the Lord "are right and juſt; you had promiſed, "before you entered here, to marry a per- "ſon who without doubt is ſuitable to "you.—Heaven, by this reverſe, ſhews it "does not ſuffer us to break our word; "and, by an effect of its goodneſs, re- "ſtores to you the liberty of keeping yours. "This perſon has juſt rights over you, "which he came even here to claim. It "is the only ſtep which is left you to take. "If I was allowed to conſult only my incli- "nation for you, I ſhould take great plea- "ſure in proving to you my tenderneſs, by "keeping you with me: but we ought "to ſacrifice our inclination to our duty, "and I have already told you our rules "oppoſe it."

At theſe words the abbeſs left her, uncertain what was to be her fate. Her prayers and

and tears had not the leaſt effect. They came at length to tell her, a berlin from her father waited for her at the gate, with a woman to accompany her. This intelligence reſtored her tranquillity. She left the convent without regret, ſuppoſing ſhe obeyed her father's commands.

If ſhe had ſtill ſome anxiety remaining, her virtue preſerved her from all fear of danger, eſpecially from me. Her dependance on the purity of my ſentiments, was ſtronger than her apprehenſions of the violence of my love.

She put few queſtions to the woman who attended her, who was beſides ſufficiently prepared. They ſtopped at F——, at my houſe: Julia did not perceive this circumſtance. It was late: they were ſerved as if they were in an inn, to take off all

ſuſpicion from the too ſcrupulous Mademoiſelle D'Ornance.

I paſſed the night in the moſt painful inquietude in reſpect to the fate which waited me in the morning. It depended abſolutely on the manner in which Julia received me. I knew the firmneſs of her mind, above the influence of the paſſions. I reflected for the firſt time, how violent and inconſiderate was the ſtep I had taken. I doubted whether Julia could reſolve to pardon me: ſhe ought, notwithſtanding, to be ſenſible what had obliged me to act thus.

The misfortune which threatened me was irreparable. I had ſeized the only means which could prevent it.

I only took her from a ſtate of life which diſpleaſed her, to place her in one which muſt

muſt be dear to her if ſhe preſerved any remains of tenderneſs for me. This idea encouraged me, it opened my heart to hope.

When I knew Julia was riſen, and that her ſervant had left her, I preſented myſelf before her, without giving her any notice. I ſtopped at the door. I had fallen on my knees, without advancing, when ſhe perceived me. My countenance expreſſed the dreadful inquietude I ſuffered. My eyes were caſt down, and I did not dare to open my mouth. I reſembled rather a criminal who appeared before his judge, than a lover who had in his power the object of his adoration.

She ſaw me, and changed color ſeveral times: an univerſal trembling ſeized her, ſhe fell almoſt lifeleſs in her chair; ſhe endeavoured to ſpeak; her voice expired on her lips.

" Where am I?" cried ſhe at length, ſighing, raiſing her eyes to Heaven, and afterwards hiding her face with her hands.

" You are," replied I, in a timid broken voice, " in the houſe of the man in the " world the moſt reſpectful, and the moſt " ſubmiſſive."

" *Submiſſive!*" repeated ſhe, without changing her attitude; and, after a moment's ſilence, " This man calls himſelf " reſpectful, and I am in his houſe! And " how am I there? By outrage, by vio- " lence. He tears me from a ſacred aſy- " lum; he deceives me, he forces me " away, and then talks of his *ſubmiſſion!*"

I had drawn nearer her during this diſcourſe, ſtill on my knees. She ſeemed to tremble. Afterwards, darting towards me a look

a look the anger of which I was unable to ſupport, " Do you expect, Sir, that I " ſhould pardon you ?"

" Yes, Julia, I hope it; overwhelm " me with the name of raviſher, with an " hundred appellations ſtill more deteſta- " ble; but deign to hear me.—I adore " you.—Ah! if I had not loved you " to ſuch exceſs, I ſhould long ſince " have renounced all hope. What have I " done, that does not prove to you the " violence of my love ?"

" Yes, its violence, but not its purity."

" Is this a time for theſe chimerical " diſtinctions ? I adore you, and I ought " to attempt every thing to poſſeſs you. " An inſtant more would have ſeparated " us for ever. Tell me what I ought " to do ?"

"To reſpect me!"

"Ah! I loſe you without reſource, "Julia, you are in my power; you have "no longer any other dependance: and "I am notwithſtanding an humble ſlave, "who on his knees demands his pardon. "You are worthy of me. Allow me to be "ſtill worthy of you. Make me happy, "or let me put an end to my life."

"Do you ſtill chuſe violent means!" replied Julia, with a ſmile of indignation. "But you ought to know, it is not eaſy "thus to affright me. Go, Sir; do not "hope a pardon which you aſk in vain "with all the humiliation you merit. "Send me back; bluſh all your life for "the ineffectual baſeneſs of your conduct, "as I ought for having ever eſteemed "you."

The

The complaints and reproaches of Julia had rendered me furious: her indignation and contempt calmed me — what a calm! It however reſtored to me ſufficient force to diſcuſs coolly the motives of my attempt.

"'Tis well, Julia," ſaid I; "return "when you pleaſe; I am ready to con- "duct you. Embrace this profeſſion, to "which you ſacrifice me, in ſpite of a "beloved father, in ſpite of the lover who "adores you, and whom you ought to "love; in ſpite of your vows, of Heaven, "and yourſelf. Weep eternally in the "gloomy ſolitude you have choſen; not "for the miſeries of which you complain, "ſince I have offered to put an end to "them; but for thoſe you will have in- "flicted on all who ought to have been "moſt

" moſt dear to you.—Alas! far from
" forgetting your misfortunes in your re-
" treat, if they are ever known there,
" you will feel them a thouſand times
" more cruelly.

" You will then ſay, If I were in the
" world, the delight of cauſing the felicity
" of one alone, would make me amends
" for the contempt of the reſt of mankind.
" But would this contempt really exiſt?
" The world would diſcover in you vir-
" tues which would command its eſteem.

" In the cloyſter, on the contrary,
" where the underſtanding is weak, and the
" heart implacable, thoſe very virtues
" would be new ſubjects of reproach. If
" it is retirement that pleaſes you, is it
" to be found amongſt twenty women,
" indolent, diſunited, rather than in your
" own

" own houſe, far removed from general
" ſociety, with your father, your huſband,
" and your children? 'Tis there you
" would have your choice to live, if thoſe
" names were ſtill dear to your heart.
" But it is become inſenſible to every ſoft
" affection. You no longer fear to afflict
" a father whoſe wiſhes had with you
" once the force of commands. Your
" huſband — he is at your feet, and you
" ſee with a tranquil eye the deſpair to
" which you have reduced him — him to
" whom — but I in vain recall that hap-
" py time: your remembrance of it is
" paſt!"

I walked ſlowly from her as I ſaid this. She called me back, in a reſolute tone. I returned haſtily, I threw myſelf on my knees before her, I preſſed her hand in mine, ſhe did not withdraw it.

" Julia!"

"Julia!" cried I, with the ſtrongeſt expreſſion in my looks and manner—ſhe regarded me attentively, but made me no reply. I repeated with ſtill greater emphaſis, "Ah! Julia!—I reſted my head on her knees. She preſſed my hand, which ſtill held hers; at length ſhe broke ſilence.

"You know if I have loved you, and "if the love I had for you was of a nature "to change. But conſider, that I, whom "you have often yourſelf called the *mo-* "*deſt* Julia, that I find myſelf in a ſtrange "place, alone, with a man, with my "lover; that it is to the violence of this "very lover I owe this diſgrace; and that "I am to pardon, for a public outrage, "him to whom I with ſuch difficulty "forgave an indiſcretion unknown to all "but myſelf.

"You

" You chuſe then that I ſhould give
" up all honor? If there are reaſons which
" may excuſe you in my eye, will the world
" know them, or would it be ſatisfied
" with them if it did?—I agree that this
" was the only ſtep which could have
" prevented my taking the veil: but
" ſuch is the nature of our misfortunes,
" that you cannot prevent it without a
" crime."

" Why, cruel, have you then reduced
" me to this ſhocking neceſſity, ſince no-
" thing has conſtrained you?"

" The offer you made me conſtrained
" me: a happineſs ſo great, ſo unexpect-
" ed, might one day have ſeduced me.
" At leaſt I feared it.—You, St. Forlaix,
" are young and impetuous, eaſy to be
" led

" led away by your paſſions: your love,
" by dazzling your ſight, would have un-
" done us. When ſatisfied, it would have
" ſubſided: it would ſoon have ſhewn
" your error in its true colors. Regret
" and deſpair would have preyed upon
" your heart. I ſhould in a little time
" have ceaſed to be all the world to you,
" and you would have been tempted to
" fill elſewhere the void of your ſoul.
" But the conſolation you ſought would
" have fled before the ſhame with which
" you would have been overwhelmed by
" marrying me; and you would have
" brought me back, inſtead of tenderneſs,
" the bitter repentance of an union
" which appears to you at preſent ſo de-
" ſirable.

" I ought to ſacrifice myſelf, to take
" from the world what it has rejected, in
" order

" order to leave it what will be its great-
" eſt boaſt and glory. What I meant to
" do was only my duty, and you have
" been very blameable in endeavoring to
" prevent me — the plea you urge is it-
" ſelf a crime, which you have endeavor-
" ed to exculpate by a greater — and you
" wiſh me to pardon you."

" I wiſh you to love me, but I feel that
" I wiſh it in vain. If you were ſtill ca-
" pable of it, would you foretel the end
" of a paſſion, which nothing but death
" can exile from my ſoul? 'Tis your
" only reſource to oppoſe my deſires: 'tis
" the pretext with which you cover your
" indifference."

" You are very unreaſonable;" inter-
rupted ſhe: " can I marry you without
" the

" the conſent of my father? I am as ig-
" norant as you of his abode."

" You ignorant of it? I am doomed
" to be unhappy. It was from you I
" hoped to learn it: but if this is the
" motive of your refuſal, promiſe me to
" fulfil all my hopes, if we find Monſ.
" D'Ornance, and obtain his conſent."

Julia was ſome time without replying.
" St. Forlaix," ſaid ſhe at laſt, " I love
" you; and I am going to give you the
" ſtrongeſt proof of it — you have cruelly
" offended me — I pardon you. Tell
" me now, whether it is my friendſhip or
" my heart you deſire."

" Ah! 'tis friendſhip only which
" can—"

" 'Tis

" Tis well: you are my friend. Re-
" place me in a convent. We will ſee
" each other there. I engage myſelf never
" to take the vows without your conſent.
" You ought to be ſatisfied — expect no
" more."

Did you never, my dear Sir, experience thoſe exceſſive, yet diſturbed and imperfect tranſports of joy, to which we feel there is ſomething ſtill wanting, which are neither ſufficiently abundant or unmixed to fill and expand the heart? Such was that which I felt at Julia's propoſal. Alas! I yet found it infinitely ſweet — it was ſo long ſince my heart had felt any emotion but that of ſorrow!

I conſented to all which this adored miſtreſs of my ſoul demanded. She choſe a con-

a convent in this city, into which ſhe is to enter in the afternoon. We informed ourſelves mutually of all that had paſſed during our ſeparation. I learned from her, that Monſ. D'Ornance, on their arrival from Paris, had conſtantly refuſed to tell them the ſubject of his affliction; but that the fatal letter of Corſange, which was found by Madame D'Ornance, had occaſioned the death of this tender mother, as we had ſuppoſed. Since that time, Monſ. D'Ornance, more retired than ever, has ſpoke to no human being but Germain. One morning he came to his daughter's apartment, conducted her to the monaſtery where I found her, and diſappeared without telling her whither he was going. Germain is the only perſon in his confidence.

I had juſt left Julia, and was returning to write you theſe particulars, and at the ſame

ſame time to impart them to this faithful old man, when I perceived him in a bye ſtreet, at a little diſtance. I ſaw he endeavored to avoid me. I ran towards him, but could not overtake him. I imagine that, either from diſtruſt or ſome other motive, he has watched all my proceedings, and knows as well as myſelf what is become of Julia. The ſervant I had placed about her, whom I had met with by chance, has let ſome expreſſions eſcape her, which makes me think they are very well known to each other, and that ſhe came to me by his management. I cannot blame theſe precautions. They repair in ſome meaſure the infidelity he has been guilty of to his maſter, in order to ſerve me.

How unjuſt are mankind! We expect conceſſions, which, when made, we cannot help diſapproving.

Tell me what progreſs you have made with Monſ. De l'Etang. Though Julia forbids me all hope, I cannot yet conſent to give it up.

Adieu!

ST. FORLAIX.

LETTER LXIV.

To the Baron DE L'ETANG,
at ST. FORLAIX.

Paris.

YOU have treated with a very high hand, Sir, my arguments in favor of St. Forlaix's marriage with Mademoiſelle D'Ornance. You take for granted what, if true, would give you a certainty of carrying your cauſe.

You begin by ſuppoſing the *prejudice*, which marks with infamy the relations of a perſon who has ſuffered for his crimes, *juſt*, *uſeful*, *neceſſary*. In this foundation you deſtroy a part of my reaſonings with as much facility as juſtice. But it is this

very principle I would attack. If the prejudice is uſeful, it muſt be preſerved, and St. Forlaix ought never to think of this marriage; but if, far from being ſo, it is deſtructive, it ſhould be aboliſhed, and the marriage of St. Forlaix is attended with no inconvenience.

"You reproach me with giving the name of *prejudice* to what you call "a very wiſe "law." Permit me to tell you, that this is a frivolous diſtinction. Is it in itſelf juſt? This is all which it imports us to know. You give alſo to this law an origin merely conjectural, and which I entreat we may examine a little more cloſely. How can you, in the firſt place, believe that a whole family would "voluntarily ſub-"mit itſelf to perpetual infamy," becauſe one of its members had offended ſociety? All that I can allow is, that, touched with

grief

grief and regret, it might have fled the commerce of mankind. But it is not probable that this humiliating retreat ſhould have been obſerved and approved by ſociety: and ſtill leſs that its propriety ſhould have been ſo ſtrongly felt, as to give it the force of a law in reſpect to other families; or that the world ſhould have impoſed arbitrarily on thoſe families a burthen which the firſt had taken on itſelf from choice.

The fear of diſhonor is, you ſay, a very powerful motive to engage a father to attend to the education of his ſon. Ah! Sir! how do you abaſe paternal love! You have a very low and a very unworthy idea of this ſentiment, if you think it has occaſion for ſuch a fear to excite it. What father have you heard ſay, "I muſt educate my ſon with care, leſt he ſhould

« periſh by the hands of the executioner?" Does this horrible idea ever enter into the mind of a parent? Will not a father who has virtuous ſentiments endeavor to tranſmit them to his ſon becauſe he knows the inestimable value of virtue? If he could one moment give way to the ſhameful apprehenſion you ſuppoſe, he would deſerve it ſhould be juſt.

The good or bad education, Sir, which parents give to their children, depends on the extent of their talents, or their affections. Againſt the want of talents, the fear of diſhonor would be very uſeleſs: this fear will be alſo very inſufficient to animate the father who hates and neglects his ſon. He who gives him his attention, and who loves him, will have no occaſion for it. It is not therefore neceſſary that this prejudice ſhould be ſtrengthened. If

there is a degree of men on whom ſuch a fear could have any influence, it muſt be only the baſeſt and loweſt of the populace. But as they are not in that reſpect ſenſible to honor, this fear would be uſeleſs even with them.

You ſuppoſe a young man, ready to abandon himſelf to crimes, reſtrained by the fear of diſhonoring his family.—I have ſeen no examples of this kind; but that is not with me a reaſon for denying them.

What is a much ſtronger is, the impoſſibility which it appears to me to carry with it. A young man "ready to abandon "himſelf to crimes" never foreſees the fatal conſequences which attend them.

If he foreſaw them, whatever contempt he may have entertained for death, he

would certainly not commit them. The firſt crime is ſeldom that which leads to the ſcaffold. The guilty do not even believe it will lead them on to ſuch offences as may deſerve it. The firſt crime therefore cannot excite the apprehenſions which you ſay will hinder its being committed. And alas! when once delivered up to a criminal courſe of life, is not a man too far removed from ſentiments of honor and humanity, to be ſenſible to the diſgrace of his family?

I will however admit, as an extraordinary caſe, what you ſuppoſe. If this ſuppoſed young man loves his parents and relations enough to be reſtrained by the idea of their infamy, do you believe that of quitting them for ever, of afflicting them by his death, will not be as powerful in his heart? For, in fine, [redacted] not honor from which

which you expect this effect; 'tis affection.

If this young man had honor, he would be ſenſible to diſgrace, even as it affected himſelf only.

That which induces you the more to regard this prejudice as equitable is, that "the puniſhment is proportioned." Theſe are your words: "If the ſhame extends to "the whole, death is the portion of the "guilty individual only."

Do you call this a juſt *proportion?* It muſt have been in a moment when your reaſon was diſturbed, you could aſſert that ſhame and life was a leſs heavy puniſhment than ſhame and death.

I come back with you to the family of Ornance. "It is culpable," you ſay, "for

be made with a noble and generous confidence, in order infallibly to ſucceed.

Let St. Forlaix haſten to the army, crown himſelf with laurels, and return to ſeize the prize due to his valor. *His ſuperiors*, far from *deſpiſing him*, will recompenſe his honorable labors, without thinking his glory tarniſhed. *His equals*, far from *flying him*, will be the firſt to felicitate his happineſs. Admiration will ſoon bear down the reſt. But if, however improbable, the event ſhould be different, the injuſtice of mankind will inſpire him with ſuch honeſt indignation and contempt, that he will be, from that time, very little ſolicitous for their eſteem. He will avoid ſociety, not be *avoided by it*.

His children will grow up with the more ardent thirſt for glory; and that which they

they acquire will be a continual reproach to their country, for what it has neglected to do for them. The nation will feel this, for men ſooner or later learn to feel; and theſe injured children will receive marks of its repentance. They will *tranſmit the birth they have received*, becauſe time will have diſſolved into air the phantom which miſled them; becauſe merit and reaſon plead more eloquently for them!

St. Forlaix will have no affairs of honor; he will either be rewarded, or he will quit the ſervice. But if he ſhould, they could not be *againſt the brave ſupports of his country*; becauſe a brave man underſtands, and St. Forlaix will not have forfeited, *true honor*. If ſome coxcomb ſhould attack him, he will have on his ſide the juſtice of his cauſe; the other will have only a fooliſh ardor, which he will miſtake for

courage; he will be the victim of his temerity, and the ſucceſs of this firſt affair will prevent others.

If this action ſhould not be *forgot*, nobody will dare to reproach him with it, becauſe he has every quality neceſſary to juſtify his conduct.

Nor will you be diſhonored for having *permitted* it. St. Forlaix is very near the age which will put it out of your power to oppoſe it. You will by conſenting have at leaſt the merit of having rendered him happy, and in ſome meaſure expiated the injury you have done Monſ. D'Ornance, in favoring, contrary to his orders, the love of his ſon.

St. Forlaix will be ſufficiently juſtified in contracting this marriage without your

conſent,

conſent, when it is known that it is I, his uncle and his guardian, who have adviſed him to it.

This letter is the laſt I ſhall write you on this ſubject. If I have now failed to perſuade, I ſhall always fail.

I expect your determination with impatience, that I may on my ſide conſider what remains for me to do.

I am, &c.

DE PARIS.

LET-

LETTER LXV.

To Monſ. De Premont, at P——.

F——.

YOU would not, my dear friend, be the confident of my pains: you will not refuſe to ſhare my pleaſures? The reaſons you urged againſt hearing me are no longer of force. It is not a ſecret which I confide to you. It is my happineſs, of which I would inform you before I render it public.

I have found her whom I love. This is to tell you, in terms ſufficiently clear, that I have forgot all my ſorrows. A thouſand obſtacles ſtill oppoſe my felicity. But the

the ſtrongeſt is deſtroyed. Love and hope baniſh the reſt from before my eyes.

Yes, my dear friend, if Heaven ſeconds my wiſhes, I ſhall ſoon have nothing left to deſire.

It is a companion it has choſen for me; a friend worthy of us, which it has added to our ſociety. Believe my heart which ſpeaks: never woman merited more to be adored.

You will love her, my friend, if you love virtue. Do not fear that my friendſhip for you will be leſſened. Happineſs, on the contrary, warms the heart, and fills it with tenderneſs. You, my uncle, my Julia, and her father, will partake mine, without being ever able to exhauſt it.

Ah! deign alſo to partake my joy: forget, if neceſſary, that it is love which cauſes it.

it. It will be to rob me of half my felicity to let me enjoy it alone. But why ſhould I fear your refuſal? can you be inſenſible to the happineſs of your friend? and is it not true happineſs to have found her whom love and reaſon equally deſtine for me? I have the ſtrongeſt hope that you will approve my choice. It is the only one worthy of me: and I am under a neceſſity of never making another. Honor and humanity ordain this. Can my friend then diſſuade me from it?

Unforeſeen misfortunes have divided our families. The greateſt has been the portion of hers. But they have no power over our hearts. The indiſcretion of a brother, puniſhed by a ſhameful death, has taken from Julia, in the eyes of the greater part of mankind, a falſe and frivolous glory: but ſhe has loſt none of thoſe qualities which merit

merit the eſteem of wiſe men, and to which ſhe owes my adoration. I loved Julia before her misfortune: who then can ſo properly repair it? Happy in being able to form an union which this circumſtance has rendered more equal; and to oblige her the more, after her diſgrace, by receiving my happineſs from her hands!

You will ſee her, my friend; you will, I hope, ſee her before our marriage. You will then be the firſt to preſs me to it. This moment, ſo ardently deſired, is not yet near; the delicacy of Julia hinders her from conſenting to it at preſent. Her father, on whom it depends more to determine her than on my own tenderneſs, this cruel father avoids me.

We have never ſeen each other: he appeared once deſirous to know me. But

his misfortunes have undoubtedly driven from his heart that deſire, which would now be ſo favorable to me. I hope, however, that the pains I take to diſcover his retreat will not be always unſucceſsful. Ah! if he could ſee my heart, could ſee there that the ſervice which he could render me with Julia is not the ſole motive which makes me deſire his preſence, he could not ſo long conceal himſelf from a ſon who ſo tenderly loves him!

Adieu! my dear friend! Soften, by writing to me, the chagrin which I feel at being abſent from you. Tell me you rejoice in my happineſs. I have occaſion for the approbation of a man of your reſpectable character, not to determine my reſolution, but to enable me to applaud myſelf with more certainty on my choice.

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER LXVI.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at F—.

P——.

THE ſeaſon of love is paſſed with me. It has occaſioned me to commit one fault only, but that was dreadful. I have deteſted it too much ſince, to forget any of its fatal effects. Cruel and dangerous propenſity, which diſturbs the reaſon, changes the face of objects, covers with flowers the abyſs to which it leads its votaries, plunges them in, and then takes its rapid flight! Wretched is the man who ſuffers himſelf to be enſlaved by this fatal paſſion!

If you deſire an example of this to aſſiſt in tearing it from your ſoul, I need bring

that it is only an exceſs of glory which can balance even a ſlight degree of diſhonor: let one member of a family ſhew himſelf a villain, it becomes the duty of the reſt to prove that he was unworthy of them. The loſs of honor cannot be irreparable; and if infamy extends from an individual to all allied to him, honor ought to have a ſimilar privilege.

Every man, in every rank of life, may then hope ſome day to recover the rights of which a criminal relation has deprived him. Let the warrior ſeek in the boſom of combat either a glorious death, or the more brilliant palm of conqueſt, to obliterate his diſhonor.

Let the magiſtrate, indefatigable in his duty, ſhew the greater number of unhappy perſons whom he has ſuccoured. Even commerce is not deprived of all reſource.

Let

Let thoſe uſeful actions which would merit, and obtain to the perſon engaged in it, a more elevated rank from the hands of his Sovereign, procure him that reinſtatement in his former rights of which he will have rendered himſelf worthy. On this principle, every man who ſuffers for the crimes of his family will be conſtrained to riſe above himſelf, if he wiſhes to repair them. He will no longer keep himſelf within the narrow bounds of a duty, which infamy, though unmerited, will have rendered more extenſive.

Thus this prejudice, which you regard as abſurd and cruel, by being rendered leſs ſevere, would become more uſeful.

Has the family to whom you would ally yourſelf purſued this road? If it has not, it is unworthy of you: its virtues, which you boaſt, are falſe and imperfect.

Your

Your miſtreſs's ſex precludes her from undertaking this taſk: but ſhe has, you ſay, a father; let him deſerve you ſhould become his ſon. You expect him to perſuade his daughter to eſpouſe you; if he conſents to your union before he has done his duty, I ſhall have a very mean idea of his ſoul. Let the luſtre of his actions efface the ſhame of his family, and I then allow you to tell me it has virtues.

No, my friend; whilſt you permit me this title, whilſt you liſten to the dictates of my heart, you ſhall never form ties as ſhameful as they are inconſiſtent with your true happineſs. You ought not to be leſs delicate than your miſtreſs! She is truly virtuous, ſince ſhe bluſhes for the ignominy with which her alliance would cover you.

Imitate her. Can you not, without being united to her, preſerve for her the ſentiments

timents which ſhe merits? Render your worthy of the idea which you have forn of her virtues.

"I ſhall love her," you ſay. Yes, ſhall love her, whilſt ſhe perſiſts in her fuſal. I will forget the misfortunes of wh ſhe is not guilty, and will grant her the eſteem ſhe merits. But, I confeſs you, I ſhould not be able to hinder myſ from entertaining the moſt profound cc tempt for her, if I ſaw her, before her glc is recovered, the wife of the Marquis I St. Forlaix.

Why am I not with you? The praye the tears of friendſhip, would be mc eloquent than reaſon, with a man who no longer in a ſtate to diſtinguiſh it.

I would hold you to my boſom, a you ſhould never tear yourſelf from

to commit an imprudence. But duty ſeparates us, and I ought not to complain.

I employ myſelf more than ever in learning the art of war. I paſs all my time in this ſtudy. I am praiſed, blamed, and ridiculed, as it always happens when you act differently from other men.

Adieu! my dear Colonel! Vouchſafe to weigh without prejudice all that I have ſaid to you. Continue to love me, notwithſtanding my ſeverity. Pardon my frankneſs, perhaps ſometimes too great; but it is thus, I think, I ought to ſpeak to my friend.

DE PREMONT.

LET-

LETTER LXVII.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at F——.

Paris.

IMMEDIATELY after the letter in which you engaged me to obtain Monſ. De l'Etang's conſent to your marriage with Julia, I wrote him one ſufficiently ſtrong to determine a man of his age, who has not been habituated to very minute diſquiſitions. I expected that he would either refuſe me abſolutely, or that he would enter into our views without farther examination.

I have received from him, with the greateſt aſtoniſhment, a reply at once haughty and ſenſible, capable of ſtaggering me, if

reaſon had not been on my ſide. His arguments, not very ſolid indeed, but very often ſpecious, have ſometimes extremely embarraſſed me. I diſguiſed as well as I could the impreſſion ſome of his reaſonings had made on me, and ſent him another letter, of the ſucceſs of which I was very uncertain: if the ſpirit of his firſt anſwer ſurprized me, I am yet more aſtoniſhed at his ſecond. He has not even replied to my arguments. Judge yourſelf of his letter.

If I found little of the Baron De l'Etang in the firſt letter, you will ſee him very ſtrongly marked in this:

"To Monſ. DE PRELE, at Paris.

"SIR, St. Forlaix.

"IT is not at all my opinion, that my "grandſon, the Marquis De St. Forlaix, "ſhould

" ſhould eſpouſe Mademoiſelle Julia D'Or-
" nance, after the adventure which has hap-
" pened to Monſ. Corſange her brother.

" You have wrote me many reaſonings
" on this ſubject; but I aſſure you they
" are far from being ſatisfactory to me.
" Our family has always been without ſtain,
" and ought always to continue ſo.

" If the Marquis De St. Forlaix, his fa-
" ther and my ſon-in-law, was alive, he
" would never ſuffer this alliance: he had
" too much honor. But as to you and your
" nephew, you may do whatever you pleaſe:
" you are his guardian; you ought to di-
" rect him. I do not oppoſe it; and if
" it is my conſent you want, I give it you.
" But it would be alſo proper to have that
" of Monſ. D'Ornance: and that will not
" be ſo eaſy as you imagine, as I believe
" him to be a very worthy and honeſt man,

" notwithſtanding what has happened to
" his ſon.

" Adieu! Sir! I wiſh you to act in this
" as becomes you; and am, very per-
" fectly, &c.

" The Baron DE L'ETANG."

This letter is, you ſee, very inconſiſtent with what I have told you of the firſt. It is a myſtery which I cannot comprehend. But this is of little importance. If you perſiſt in your reſolution, write to Monſ. D'Ornance. Germain, who knows the place of his abode, will convey your letter to him. But examine yourſelf well firſt. Remember, I have not adviſed you to any thing. I would take on myſelf the blame of this marriage in the eyes of the world, but not in yours. Compare the dictates of your reaſon with thoſe of your heart.

Do

Do nothing where they are not agreed. If you ever repent of your choice, you may aſk my counſels: but you will have no right to make me any reproaches.

Adieu!

DE PRELE.

LETTER LXVIII.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,
at Paris.

F——,

MUST all hell be without ceaſing armed againſt me? muſt it for ever offer me happineſs, only to ſnatch it, with a malignant fury, from my graſp, at the moment when I am ready to ſeize it?

Pardon me, Sir; I am no longer myſelf. All the furies are in my heart. Julia!—I have then again loſt her! She is torn from me; ſhe is gone—can I ſufficiently appeaſe the ſtorm which racks my boſom? will my deſpair give me a moment's calm to tell you all? Let me attempt it—

O, my

O, my Julia!—I have loſt her—I have already told you ſo—I enjoyed in peace, and in the innocence of my ſoul, the pleaſure of ſeeing, of converſing with her. Your laſt letter, which informed me of the kind of conſent Monſ. De l'Etang had given, was come to reanimate my hopes, without carrying more agitation into my heart. I had not dared to tell my Julia the ſteps I had taken in her favor with my family. I thought I ought, however, to ſhew her that letter.

"Alas!" ſaid ſhe, "if all your relations "conſented, deſired, and even preſſed you "to this marriage, we ſhould not be he "more advanced. My father flies me; "I never hear from him. In what corner "of the earth has he taken refuge? Why "has he abandoned me?—But," added ſhe,

" it is poſſible that we may find him, and
" that he may conſent to what you deſire—
" after this hope, are you ſtill my lover?"

" Ah! do you aſk it, Julia? can you
" believe I have ever ceaſed to be ſo one
" moment?"

" If it is ſo, we muſt no longer ſee each
" other."

" Not ſee each other!"

" Would you then take away the little
" fame which remains to me? Is it proper
" I ſhould ſee thus often the man whoſe
" wife I may ſome time be?—*Whoſe wife*
" *I may be?* How have you changed me!
" Who would have told me ſome months
" ago, that this idea could have found an
" entrance into my ſoul? St. Forlaix, I
" feel more than ever the neceſſity of what

" I pro-

" I propoſe — we ought to ſee each other
" no more."

" No, cruel!" ſaid I with heat, " no; I
" can never conſent to this. Were I to em-
" ploy the power which love has given me
" over you, I ſhould force you to receive
" the pure homage of the heart which adores
" you. I will never give up the delight
" of ſeeing you; a delight, the privation
" of which has coſt me ſo many tears."

" Barbarian as you are, I am at your
" mercy, and you abuſe the ſtate to which
" you have reduced me. If I muſt be-
" ſeech, if I muſt be a ſupplicant, behold
" me at your feet. Do not at leaſt ſee me
" ſo often. Paſs ſome days without com-
" ing. Leave me the power of deceiving
" myſelf: let me ſtill think I have ſome
" right to the public eſteem."

"You are in the right. I was too hap-
"py. I was ſo much ſo, that I could
"ſcarce conceive a ſuperior felicity. This
"happineſs diſpleaſes you. I give it up.
"Command, Madam; it is my part to la-
"ment, and to obey."

"You owe this to me, my dear St.
"Forlaix. Alas! wretched as I am, what-
"ever reaſons I have to renounce all hope,
"I cannot keep myſelf from believing it is
"*your* honor which I am preſerving, when
"I attend to *my own!*"

"When then ſhall I ſee you again?"

"As late as poſſible!"

"To-morrow?"

"No; let us wait three days."

"*Three days!* think what I ſhall ſuffer."

"It

" It is neceſſary."

" It is well, Julia: I will not ſee you of " three days."

Such was our farewell. It was our laſt. I waited the expiration of this term with the greateſt impatience. It at length arrived; and as ſoon as the proper hour came, I flew to the convent. I expected to find Julia in the parlour as uſual. She was not there. I enquired for her.

" She went from hence, Sir, laſt night."

" Went from hence! Why will you ſay " this?"

" I ſay the truth."

" Gone from hence! ah, cruel!" ſaid I, recalling to my memory our laſt converſation;

tion; "it was then to this dreadful blow "you deſtined thoſe delays ſo earneſtly de- "manded. You have played with my "credulity and tenderneſs. She is gone!— "She only feigned to love me, to make "me feel her loſs more ſeverely. She aſk- "ed theſe three days of me, in order to fly "me. Madam," ſaid I to the nun who had given me this information, "you aſ- "ſure me ſhe is gone. Did ſhe tell you "what had determined her to this cruelty? "In the name of God, Madam, anſwer "me."

"We are ignorant as well as you, Sir, "of the cauſe," ſaid the nun. "Laſt "night we were alarmed with a knock- "ing at the gate of the convent, *by order* "*of the King*. They aſked for a young "perſon, named *Julia D'Ornance*. We "only knew her under the name of *Julia* "*De St. Agnes*. They deſcribed her to us.

"They

" They ſaw and knew her. The order " was poſitive. We were obliged to obey, " and to deliver her up."

" Great God! Madam, is what you tell " me poſſible?" cried I with a voice almoſt extinct. " *An order from the King! a* " *lettre de cachet!*"

" It was, Sir."

" They have torn her from me! It is not " then however ſhe who flies me. But who " can have acted with ſuch authority in reſpect " to her? They have forced her away—in " the night too!—They dreaded my pre- " ſence, and my deſpair.—Forced away! " my Julia! like a criminal, like the moſt " unworthy of her ſex! Tell me, Madam, " did ſhe weep when they treated her " thus?"

" I did

" I did not ſee her ſhed a ſingle tear. " She breathed ſome ſighs, and after- " wards tranquilly prepared to go. She " embraced and thanked us; ſhe would " have left us, for her penſion, ſome jewels, " which we refuſed: ſhe at length entered " the chaiſe, with a dignity which awed " thoſe who were to conduct her."

" *She ſighed, and did not weep!*—No; my " Julia has a great and noble ſoul;—ſhe " did not weep—and yet I weep.—Par- " don me, Madam; I expoſe my weakneſs " too much before you—I abuſe your " goodneſs: reſume your uſual employ- " ment; allow me to wait here a little, " to recover myſelf. Once again, Madam, " pardon me:—re-enter—your ſtate is " made for peace and ſerenity. The more

" violent

" violent emotions of the ſoul are un-
" known to you."

The nun ſighed, and left me. I went out of the parlour a ſhort time after.

" I am betrayed," cried I, as ſoon as I came to myſelf. " It is Germain, he " alone ſpread this ſnare; he has joined with " my enemies. I know no other."—

I made inſtant enquiries after him in all the inns. I heard that he had in reality left F—— only two days before. Do not, my dear Sir, accuſe me of precipitation in my judgement. He was the only perſon to whom Julia's retreat could be known. The *lettre de cachet*—I know not by what means he has been able to obtain it. But he is guilty: I cannot doubt it.

All

All is ready. I ſhall leave this place inſtantly for the caſtle of Ornance. I will find the traitor, who I doubt not will boaſt his fidelity at the moment when he is tearing my heart. He will pretend a virtuous motive for the perfidy of which he has been guilty. But theſe reaſons will not ſatisfy me; I will know from this hypocrite in what place he has depoſited the treaſure of my life: I will know it, even if it is at the expence of his. Alas! it is not perhaps in his power to reſtore what he has raviſhed from me. Orders as reſpectable as they are cruel — I will know at leaſt the place which ſhe inhabits. I will have the pleaſure to breathe the ſame air. I have friends; they will employ themſelves effectually for me. Theſe orders, which cauſe the misfortunes of ſo many worthy members of ſociety, were firſt eſtabliſhed

for

for their good. If villains have betrayed the miniſters into the commiſſion of injuſtice; cannot mèn of honor diſabuſe them, to protect innocence?

Monſ. Premont ſays often, "we ought "never to deſpair of happineſs." But it is equally true, that we ought as little to depend on it with too much confidence.

I am, &c.

ST. FORLAIX.

END OF VOL. III.